

**Ladakh poised to emerge as India's Premier Winter Sports destination: LG Kavinder Gupta *Emphasises need to nurture local talent for national & international events.***

Leh, Oct 13: Ladakh has immense potential to become a premier winter sports destination driven by its geographical terrain and extreme winter conditions. The region needs adequate winter sports infrastructure and connectivity to attract both domestic and international winter sports lovers, thereby promoting Ladakh as an adventure and winter sports destination, with a special focus on boosting winter tourism to boost livelihood opportunities of the locals.

This was stated by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Kavinder Gupta, while chairing a meeting to discuss the upcoming development projects related to Winter Sports at Drass and Zaskar. The meeting was attended by Chairman, LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoun; Executive Councillor, LAHDC Kargil, Er Punchok Tashi; Councillors from Drass and Zaskar; Administrative Secretary, YSS, Bhanu Prabha; Joint Director, YSS, Tahir Hussain; government officials and members from Ski Association and Zaskar Ski School.

The Lt Governor emphasised tapping Ladakh's winter sports potential to develop the region as a premier winter sports destination for skiers and winter sports lovers on the lines of Gulmarg. He stressed that the establishment of the Winter Sports Academy and the installation of Chair Lift/Ski Drag Lift would also boost tourism and provide economic opportunities for local residents. He underlined UT Administration's commitment to developing Ladakh into a top winter sports destination, with Khelo India Winter Games and other winter sports events, particularly those related to ice hockey, being organised annually in Ladakh during the peak winter months.

The Lt Governor also mentioned key notable initiatives taken by the UT Administration, with the support of the Government of India, including the installation of the chilling plant for the ice hockey rink at NDS Stadium in Leh and also in Kargil to create year-round artificial ice for the benefit of local players. The development of such infrastructure would help in nurturing local talent for national and international competitions, including the Winter Olympics.

The stakeholders, including the CEC/Chairman, Executive Councillor, and Councillors from LAHDC Kargil, along with members of the Ski Association, requested the Lt. Governor to initiate work on winter sports development at the earliest, highlighting the potential for Ladakh to become a hub for winter sports in India while empowering local talent.

Earlier, officials from Ronmas Pvt India, the consultancy firm, apprised about the project, with Chair Lift/Ski Drag Lift to be established in the first phase and Winter Sports Academy in the second.



