

## **Himachal Pradesh Statehood Day celebrated at Lok Niwas under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative**

**Leh, April 15:** Himachal Day, commemorating the foundation of Himachal Pradesh, was celebrated with enthusiasm at Lok Niwas, UT Ladakh, under the aegis of the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The event witnessed participation from armed forces personnel hailing from Himachal Pradesh and serving in Ladakh, along with officials and staff of the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat.

Himachal Day is observed annually on April 15 to mark the formation of Himachal Pradesh as a Chief Commissioner's Province in 1948, following the merger of 30 princely hill states. While the state attained full statehood on January 25, 1971, April 15 continues to hold immense significance as a celebration of the region's foundational identity and its rich cultural heritage, often referred to as "Dev Bhoomi."

Speaking on the occasion, Under Secretary Ms. Sumera Shafi highlighted the importance of celebrating the unity and diversity of India through the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative, which aims to foster greater cultural exchange and understanding among states and Union Territories. She emphasised the cultural and geographical similarities between Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh, particularly in the high-altitude regions of Lahaul and Spiti, which share common traditions, religious practices, and landscapes.

She also paid tribute to the armed forces personnel from Himachal Pradesh who are serving in Ladakh under challenging conditions. Acknowledging their dedication and sacrifice, she commended their commitment to safeguarding the nation despite being stationed far from their homes and families in extreme weather conditions.

Extending her greetings on Himachal Day, Ms. Shafi noted that such celebrations not only strengthen emotional bonds between regions but also reaffirm the spirit of national integration and shared heritage.

The armed forces personnel from Himachal Pradesh expressed their gratitude to the UT Administration for organising the celebration. They shared their experiences of serving in Ladakh, describing it as both challenging and rewarding. They also spoke about the rich cultural heritage, natural beauty, and spiritual significance of Himachal Pradesh, popularly known as the "Abode of Snow," and highlighted its prominent tourist and religious destinations.

Officials and staff of Lok Niwas and the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat were present during the occasion.

