

L-G VK Saxena joins people of Ladakh in celebrating nation's 80th Independence Day

Hoists National Flag at historic Polo Ground, takes salute of marching contingents

Pays tribute to freedom fighters, Armed Forces and frontline personnel

Highlights Ladakh's development journey since becoming a Union Territory



Leh, August 15: The nation's 80th Independence Day was celebrated with patriotic fervour at the historic Polo Ground, where Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, hoisted the National Flag and took the salute of the marching contingents amid the cheering of the crowd.

Addressing the people of Ladakh, the Lieutenant Governor

paid tribute to the countless freedom fighters whose courage and sacrifice secured India's Independence and laid the foundation of the country's democratic journey. He also saluted the officers and jawans of the Armed Forces, Paramilitary Forces, Ladakh Scouts, Police and Border Roads Organisation guarding the nation's borders in the challenging terrain and harsh climate of Ladakh.

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the creation of Ladakh as a separate Union Territory in 2019 as a significant milestone in its development journey. With the support of the Government of India and in response to the aspirations of the people, the L-G said, the Administration has focused on strengthening infrastructure, governance, healthcare, education, tourism, renewable energy, agriculture, water security, connectivity and social welfare.

He highlighted the creation of five new districts—Sham, Nubra, Changthang, Zaskar and Drass—and 17 new tehsils and 16 new engineering divisions, which have brought administration and public services closer to the people. He also highlighted the ongoing process of establishing Hill Councils in all seven districts to strengthen grassroots democracy and ensure development is tailored to local needs.

The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted the transformation in tourism and connectivity. Ladakh received more than 3.30 lakh tourists by the end of July 2026, nearly 98 per cent of the total tourist arrivals recorded during

the entire year 2025. The road network has expanded from 1,799 km before the formation of the UT to over 4,200 km, while the number of bridges has increased from 19 to 72. The Zojila Tunnel, Leh Bypass and other strategic infrastructure projects are further strengthening all-weather connectivity.

Emphasising sustainable development, Shri Saxena highlighted initiatives including Project Him Sarovar, Himalayan rock check dams, the Indus River Green Corridor, expansion of tap-water coverage, renewable energy projects and the commissioning of geothermal wells at Puga. He also highlighted measures to strengthen the Pashmina sector, including the establishment of the Ladakh Pashmina Development Board, incentives to more than 1,200 pashmina producers and an ₹8 crore revolving fund for timely payments.

The Lieutenant Governor expressed gratitude to farmers, Changpa herders, teachers, doctors, nurses, health workers, engineers and all citizens whose dedication has contributed to Ladakh's progress. He called upon the youth to acquire knowledge, embrace innovation and seize the opportunities emerging in the rapidly changing Ladakh.

He stressed that development and environmental protection must go hand in hand, so that future generations inherit a Ladakh that remains prosperous, peaceful, vibrant and ecologically sustainable.

The Lieutenant Governor expressed confidence that, with the guidance of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and continued support of the Government of India, Ladakh would continue to contribute significantly to the national goal of Viksit Bharat @2047.

The marching contingents comprising personnel from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Rapid Action Force (RAF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Ladakh Police, Ladakh Police Commando and ex-servicemen, besides NCC cadets from the 1st and 2nd Ladakh Battalions along students from schools across Leh, Kargil, Drass, Nubra, Sham, Changthang and Zaskar also participated in the march past, regaled the crowd with their synchronous marching parade.

A demonstration by the Ladakh Police K-9 Squad and a performance by the Ladakh Police Women Pipe Band were among the highlights of the celebrations. Cultural performances were presented by the Ladakh Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, schools and educational institutions from across the UT.

Government Higher Secondary School Padul secured first place in the march past, followed by GN National Public School and Jaffaria Academy of Modern Education in second and third positions. In cultural

performances, Lamdon Model Senior Secondary School stood first, followed by Sindh Public School and Government School Leh.

On the occasion, Lieutenant Governor's Appreciation Certificates were conferred on officials and organisations for exemplary work in their respective fields. The family of Late Col Sonam Wangchuk (Retd.) was conferred the dPal rNgam Duston Lifetime Achievement Award, while His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa was conferred the dPal rNgam Duston Award 2026.

