

6 of family killed as 4-storey building collapses in Capital

Five adjoining buildings in a nearly 10m radius were either partially damaged or developed cracks due to the impact

Karn Pratap Singh
karnsingh@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Six members of a family were killed and eight others injured — four from the same family as the deceased — after an unauthorised four-storey residential building collapsed in an approximately five-foot narrow lane in Janta Colony of the Wazirpur neighbourhood, northeast Delhi, on Saturday morning, police said.

At least five adjoining multi-storey buildings in a nearly 10-metre radius were either partially damaged or developed cracks due to the impact of the collapse and the search and rescue operations were hampered because the incident happened in an area where buildings stood cheek by jowl, they added. Locals said the residential building was around 40 years old, and underwent a complete renovation around five years ago.

Joint commissioner of police (northeast) Vijay Kumar said that a team reached the spot after the Wazirpur police station received information about the



Emergency responders carry out rescue operations after a building collapsed at Janta Colony, in the Wazirpur area of Delhi on Saturday.

SANCHOUDHART PHOTO

collapse at 7.04am. "A total of 14 people were trapped when the building collapsed. Initially, eight people were rescued. The bodies of a couple, aged 50 and 46, were retrieved at 11am. The remaining four missing people were also dead by the time we spotted them and their bodies were retrieved around 5.30pm. All those listed as missing have been accounted for, but the search and rescue operation is still ongoing," said Kumar.

Personnel from the National Disaster Response Force, fire department, police, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, and civil

defence volunteers carried out the rescue operations. Delhi Fire Services chief Aul Garg said the fire control room was informed about the collapse around 7am on lane number 5 on Eidgah Road. "Seven fire tenders were rushed along with rescue teams. Two bodies were found under the rubble and removed around 11am," he said.

Officials said the building was owned by 50-year-old Abdul Matloob Khan, one of the deceased people. There was a vacant hall on the ground floor of the building and the three floors above it were occupied by

Khan and his family. Of the eight injured people, seven were admitted to Jai Prasth Chandra hospital, and a 14-month-old boy, Ahmed Khan, was taken to Guru Teg Bahadur hospital. Ahmed is Khan's grandson and his condition is said to be critical, officials said.

The five other deceased people were identified as Khan's wife Rabia, 46, their three children, Javed Khan, 23, Abdullah Khan, 15, and Zubia (first name injured), 27, and Zubia's daughter, Foria, two. Four people injured from the same family include Khan's other sons, Par-

vez Khan, 32, and Naveed Khan, 19, Parvez's wife Sita, 21, and their 14-month-old son Ahmad. The four other injured lived in an adjacent building, which was also damaged. They were identified by police as Govinda (first name known), 60, his wife Deepa (first name known), 56, their daughter, Jyoti Kashyap, 27, and Jyoti's husband, Ravi Kashyap, 27. Deepa's condition is also critical after parts of concrete fell on her head during the collapse.

Due to difficulties emerging from unauthorised constructions in the locality, rescuers formed a 50-metre human chain to remove the debris manually and dump it in a nearby ground. Officials from the NDRF and local administration told the NDRF an electricity pillar inside the lane also broke because of the impact and fell on another building, blocking the rescue.

It was not immediately clear what led to the collapse but some neighbours said the building was poorly constructed and there were also seepage issues. They said they would soon register a case, they said. No compensation or ex gratia was announced till Saturday night.

Govinda, one of the injured, said he was sleeping on their first floor house with his wife Deepa, and son Anshuk, 26. Govinda's daughter, Jyoti and her husband Ravi were on the second floor. Jyoti and Ravi said they fell on the rubble of Matloob's building when their floor came crashing down.

[AMARNATH YATRA]

8,500 personnel deployed under Operation Shiva

Ravi Krishnan Khajuria
lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Indian Army has launched Operation Shiva and has deployed over 8,500 soldiers armed with sophisticated weapons and supported by a wide array of technological and operational resources to ensure smooth and hassle-free Amarnath pilgrimage.

The ongoing pilgrimage will conclude on August 9 on the festival of Raksas Bandhan. The army has been working in close coordination with the civil administration and central armed police forces (CAPFs) to ensure the smooth and secure conduct of the Amarnath Yatra, said defence spokesperson Lt Col Sunil Bhatnagar, adding that as part of this year's enhanced security measures, over 8,500 troops have been deployed, supported by a wide array of technological and operational resources.

This annual high-tempo operation aims to provide a robust security architecture along both the northern and southern yatra routes, particularly in light of the heightened threat from Pakistan-backed proxies in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor, he added.

A dynamic counter-terrorism grid, prophylactic security deployment and corridor protection measures have been instituted, he added. Comprehensive assistance to civil authorities is also being provided, particularly in disaster management and emergency response.

The army has deployed counter-UAS (unmanned aerial surveillance) grid with more than 50 C-UAS and EW (early warning) systems each to neutralise drone threats.

Regular UAV missions and live monitoring of yatra routes and holy cave is part of the daily



BSF personnel patrol during the Amarnath Yatra in Jammu on Saturday.

AN

A dynamic counter-terrorism grid, prophylactic security deployment and corridor protection measures have been instituted, he added. Comprehensive assistance to civil authorities is also being provided, particularly in disaster management and emergency response.

The army has deployed counter-UAS (unmanned aerial surveillance) grid with more than 50 C-UAS and EW (early warning) systems each to neutralise drone threats.

Regular UAV missions and live monitoring of yatra routes and holy cave is part of the daily

security grid, he said.

He also informed regarding the other measures in place, including engineer task forces for bridge construction, track widening and disaster mitigation, deployment of more than 150 doctors and medical personnel, with two advance dressing stations, nine medical aid posts, a 100-bed hospital, and 26 oxygen booths supported by 2,00,000 litres of oxygen, signal companies for seamless communication, emergency detachments for technical support, and bomb detection and disposal squads.

[JAMMU]

CUJ STUDENT RUNNING ILLEGAL ARMS TRADE HELD

HT Correspondent
lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Police on Friday arrested a student of Central University of Jammu (CUJ), who ran illegal arms trade, said officials.

The accused was identified as Kaif Ahmed, son of Shami Ahmed, resident of Barhara near Masjid Barhara, Swam in Bihar. He was a student at Central University Jammu (Rajya) in Vijaypur area of Samba district.

"Samba police has uncovered a criminal network involved in the illegal arms trade, following a tip-off," said a spokesperson. A case has been registered under Arms Act. Further investigation is on. HT

HT Correspondent

lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Following a proposal by the BJP government at the Centre to pre-empt another round of talks over statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, co-chairman of the Leh apex body and former minister Derge Lakshmi, on Saturday announced that environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk has deferred his 35-day-long hunger strike.

Wangchuk, a newly elected member of the Leh apex body, had planned to go on hunger strike from July 15, if the Centre failed to hold talks with LAC and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) before July 15.

Addressing a press conference at Leh, Lakshmi said, "Since a new proposal has come from the Centre to hold talks on July 20 and there is no big gap between July 15 and 20, Sonam Wangchuk has decided to defer his hunger strike."

"However, we have to see if they (MHA) involve us on July 20 for another round of talks. At the same time, we have to see if they include statehood and Sixth Schedule in the agenda or not. Because we don't want to remain entangled on the issue of unemployment. A lot of talks followed by action for jobs has already taken place," said Lakshmi.

On recent developments regarding the Buddhist spiritual

leader Thupstan Chibwang parting ways with LAC, he said, "We will resolve the issue soon."

Leh apex body announced that Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) has been spearheading a protracted agitation for statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh. The home ministry had earlier assured to hold the meeting on July 28, which according to LAC, has now advanced the date to July 20.

Following continued agitation by the people of Ladakh, the Union home ministry had formed a high-powered committee in 2023 under minister of state Nityanand Rai to discuss ways to protect Ladakh's unique culture, considering its location and strategic importance. During his visit to strategic region on June 30 and July 1 union home secretary Govind Mohan Rai met a delegation of the LAC and assured them that next meeting of the MHA with apex body and KDA will be convened soon. It may be stated here that Wangchuk has recently joined the Leh apex body and also agreed upon to represent high-powered committee and sub-committee during deliberations with the union home ministry.

HT Correspondent

lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Following a proposal by the BJP government at the Centre to pre-empt another round of talks over statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, co-chairman of the Leh apex body and former minister Derge Lakshmi, on Saturday announced that environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk has deferred his 35-day-long hunger strike.

Wangchuk, a newly elected member of the Leh apex body, had planned to go on hunger strike from July 15, if the Centre failed to hold talks with LAC and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) before July 15.

Addressing a press conference at Leh, Lakshmi said, "Since a new proposal has come from the Centre to hold talks on July 20 and there is no big gap between July 15 and 20, Sonam Wangchuk has decided to defer his hunger strike."

"However, we have to see if they (MHA) involve us on July 20 for another round of talks. At the same time, we have to see if they include statehood and Sixth Schedule in the agenda or not. Because we don't want to remain entangled on the issue of unemployment. A lot of talks followed by action for jobs has already taken place," said Lakshmi.

On recent developments regarding the Buddhist spiritual

leader Thupstan Chibwang parting ways with LAC, he said, "We will resolve the issue soon."

Leh apex body announced that Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) has been spearheading a protracted agitation for statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh. The home ministry had earlier assured to hold the meeting on July 28, which according to LAC, has now advanced the date to July 20.

Following continued agitation by the people of Ladakh, the Union home ministry had formed a high-powered committee in 2023 under minister of state Nityanand Rai to discuss ways to protect Ladakh's unique culture, considering its location and strategic importance. During his visit to strategic region on June 30 and July 1 union home secretary Govind Mohan Rai met a delegation of the LAC and assured them that next meeting of the MHA with apex body and KDA will be convened soon. It may be stated here that Wangchuk has recently joined the Leh apex body and also agreed upon to represent high-powered committee and sub-committee during deliberations with the union home ministry.

HT Correspondent

lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Following a proposal by the BJP government at the Centre to pre-empt another round of talks over statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, co-chairman of the Leh apex body and former minister Derge Lakshmi, on Saturday announced that environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk has deferred his 35-day-long hunger strike.

Wangchuk, a newly elected member of the Leh apex body, had planned to go on hunger strike from July 15, if the Centre failed to hold talks with LAC and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) before July 15.

Addressing a press conference at Leh, Lakshmi said, "Since a new proposal has come from the Centre to hold talks on July 20 and there is no big gap between July 15 and 20, Sonam Wangchuk has decided to defer his hunger strike."

"However, we have to see if they (MHA) involve us on July 20 for another round of talks. At the same time, we have to see if they include statehood and Sixth Schedule in the agenda or not. Because we don't want to remain entangled on the issue of unemployment. A lot of talks followed by action for jobs has already taken place," said Lakshmi.

On recent developments regarding the Buddhist spiritual

leader Thupstan Chibwang parting ways with LAC, he said, "We will resolve the issue soon."

Leh apex body announced that Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) has been spearheading a protracted agitation for statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh. The home ministry had earlier assured to hold the meeting on July 28, which according to LAC, has now advanced the date to July 20.

Following continued agitation by the people of Ladakh, the Union home ministry had formed a high-powered committee in 2023 under minister of state Nityanand Rai to discuss ways to protect Ladakh's unique culture, considering its location and strategic importance. During his visit to strategic region on June 30 and July 1 union home secretary Govind Mohan Rai met a delegation of the LAC and assured them that next meeting of the MHA with apex body and KDA will be convened soon. It may be stated here that Wangchuk has recently joined the Leh apex body and also agreed upon to represent high-powered committee and sub-committee during deliberations with the union home ministry.

HT Correspondent

lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Following a proposal by the BJP government at the Centre to pre-empt another round of talks over statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, co-chairman of the Leh apex body and former minister Derge Lakshmi, on Saturday announced that environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk has deferred his 35-day-long hunger strike.

Wangchuk, a newly elected member of the Leh apex body, had planned to go on hunger strike from July 15, if the Centre failed to hold talks with LAC and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) before July 15.

Addressing a press conference at Leh, Lakshmi said, "Since a new proposal has come from the Centre to hold talks on July 20 and there is no big gap between July 15 and 20, Sonam Wangchuk has decided to defer his hunger strike."

"However, we have to see if they (MHA) involve us on July 20 for another round of talks. At the same time, we have to see if they include statehood and Sixth Schedule in the agenda or not. Because we don't want to remain entangled on the issue of unemployment. A lot of talks followed by action for jobs has already taken place," said Lakshmi.

On recent developments regarding the Buddhist spiritual

leader Thupstan Chibwang parting ways with LAC, he said, "We will resolve the issue soon."

Leh apex body announced that Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) has been spearheading a protracted agitation for statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh. The home ministry had earlier assured to hold the meeting on July 28, which according to LAC, has now advanced the date to July 20.

Following continued agitation by the people of Ladakh, the Union home ministry had formed a high-powered committee in 2023 under minister of state Nityanand Rai to discuss ways to protect Ladakh's unique culture, considering its location and strategic importance. During his visit to strategic region on June 30 and July 1 union home secretary Govind Mohan Rai met a delegation of the LAC and assured them that next meeting of the MHA with apex body and KDA will be convened soon. It may be stated here that Wangchuk has recently joined the Leh apex body and also agreed upon to represent high-powered committee and sub-committee during deliberations with the union home ministry.

HT Correspondent

lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Following a proposal by the BJP government at the Centre to pre-empt another round of talks over statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, co-chairman of the Leh apex body and former minister Derge Lakshmi, on Saturday announced that environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk has deferred his 35-day-long hunger strike.

Wangchuk, a newly elected member of the Leh apex body, had planned to go on hunger strike from July 15, if the Centre failed to hold talks with LAC and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) before July 15.

Addressing a press conference at Leh, Lakshmi said, "Since a new proposal has come from the Centre to hold talks on July 20 and there is no big gap between July 15 and 20, Sonam Wangchuk has decided to defer his hunger strike."

"However, we have to see if they (MHA) involve us on July 20 for another round of talks. At the same time, we have to see if they include statehood and Sixth Schedule in the agenda or not. Because we don't want to remain entangled on the issue of unemployment. A lot of talks followed by action for jobs has already taken place," said Lakshmi.

On recent developments regarding the Buddhist spiritual

leader Thupstan Chibwang parting ways with LAC, he said, "We will resolve the issue soon."

Leh apex body announced that Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) has been spearheading a protracted agitation for statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh. The home ministry had earlier assured to hold the meeting on July 28, which according to LAC, has now advanced the date to July 20.

Following continued agitation by the people of Ladakh, the Union home ministry had formed a high-powered committee in 2023 under minister of state Nityanand Rai to discuss ways to protect Ladakh's unique culture, considering its location and strategic importance. During his visit to strategic region on June 30 and July 1 union home secretary Govind Mohan Rai met a delegation of the LAC and assured them that next meeting of the MHA with apex body and KDA will be convened soon. It may be stated here that Wangchuk has recently joined the Leh apex body and also agreed upon to represent high-powered committee and sub-committee during deliberations with the union home ministry.

HT Correspondent

lettersh@hindustantimes.com

Mandi Kullu NH blocked; 241 water schemes affected in HP

HT Correspondent
lettersh@hindustantimes.com

SHIMLA: Mandi to Kullu national highway was blocked following a landslide near 4 mile in Pandoh area near Mandi on Saturday evening. A landslide also occurred at Kaichhi Mod near Pandoh Dam in Mandi district on Friday night following heavy rain, blocking the Chandigarh-Mandi National Highway for 10 hours till Saturday noon.

Mandi superintendent of police (SP) Sakshi Verma said work of removing debris is underway. As the rain halted, the traffic was restored on the road after about 10 hours and one lane of the road was opened for vehicles though Volvo buses were not allowed till the filing of this report.

The Met department has predicted light to moderate rain at many places with one or two intense spells accompanied with light thunderstorm lightning at isolated places in Mandi, Solan, Shimla and Sirmaur district in the next 12 hours along with light to moderate rain at Kullu, Chamba and Kinnaur districts while light rain has been predicted at isolated places in remaining districts of the state.

As per state emergency operation centre a total of 252 roads, including two national



Machines deployed to clear the Mandi-Kullu NH which was blocked due to heavy landslide near Pandoh on Saturday. PHOTO

highways — Mandi to Dhamru- pur via Kotli, and Mandi to Kullu near 4 mile and Binda- van were blocked on Saturday.

Jai Ram calls for speeding up rehabilitation

Leader of Opposition Jai Ram Thakur stressed on the need for rehabilitation of the disaster hit areas in Mandi district. Thakur, who on Saturday visited Karsog assembly constituency, said, "This tragedy is very big and its effects are also very serious. There are more challenges in the coming time which the administration and the affected people will have to face. Those who want to help, should also help us in rehabilitation."

Agnihotri said, "As many as 241 drinking water schemes were damaged due to the disaster, of which 150 have already been partially restored. The remaining schemes are being actively worked upon and the department teams are working round the clock to restore normal water supply at the earliest."

On recent developments regarding the Buddhist spiritual

leader Thupstan Chibwang parting ways with LAC, he said, "We will resolve the issue soon."

Leh apex body announced that Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) has been spearheading a protracted agitation for statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh. The home ministry had earlier assured to hold the meeting on July 28, which according to LAC, has now advanced the date to July 20.

Following continued agitation by the people of Ladakh, the Union home ministry had formed a high-powered committee in 2023 under minister of state Nityanand Rai to discuss ways to protect Ladakh's unique culture, considering its location and strategic importance. During his visit to strategic region on June 30 and July 1 union home secretary Govind Mohan Rai met a delegation of the LAC and assured them that next meeting of the MHA with apex body and KDA will be convened soon. It may be stated here that Wangchuk has recently joined the Leh apex body and also agreed upon to represent high-powered committee and sub-committee during deliberations with the union home ministry.

HT Correspondent

lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Following a proposal by the BJP government at the Centre to pre-empt another round of talks over statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, co-chairman of the Leh apex body and former minister Derge Lakshmi, on Saturday announced that environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk has deferred his 35-day-long hunger strike.

Wangchuk, a newly elected member of the Leh apex body, had planned to go on hunger strike from July 15, if the Centre failed to hold talks with LAC and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) before July 15.

Addressing a press conference at Leh, Lakshmi said, "Since a new proposal has come from the Centre to hold talks on July 20 and there is no big gap between July 15 and 20, Sonam Wangchuk has decided to defer his hunger strike."

"However, we have to see if they (MHA) involve us on July 20 for another round of talks. At the same time, we have to see if they include statehood and Sixth Schedule in the agenda or not. Because we don't want to remain entangled on the issue of unemployment. A lot of talks followed by action for jobs has already taken place," said Lakshmi.

On recent developments regarding the Buddhist spiritual

leader Thupstan Chibwang parting ways with LAC, he said, "We will resolve the issue soon."

Leh apex body announced that Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) has been spearheading a protracted agitation for statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh. The home ministry had earlier assured to hold the meeting on July 28, which according to LAC, has now advanced the date to July 20.

Following continued agitation by the people of Ladakh, the Union home ministry had formed a high-powered committee in 2023 under minister of state Nityanand Rai to discuss ways to protect Ladakh's unique culture, considering its location and strategic importance. During his visit to strategic region on June 30 and July 1 union home secretary Govind Mohan Rai met a delegation of the LAC and assured them that next meeting of the MHA with apex body and KDA will be convened soon. It may be stated here that Wangchuk has recently joined the Leh apex body and also agreed upon to represent high-powered committee and sub-committee during deliberations with the union home ministry.

HT Correspondent

lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Following a proposal by the BJP government at the Centre to pre-empt another round of talks over statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, co-chairman of the Leh apex body and former minister Derge Lakshmi, on Saturday announced that environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk has deferred his 35-day-long hunger strike.

Wangchuk, a newly elected member of the Leh apex body, had planned to go on hunger strike from July 15, if the Centre failed to hold talks with LAC and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) before July 15.

Addressing a press conference at Leh, Lakshmi said, "Since a new proposal has come from the Centre to hold talks on July 20 and there is no big gap between July 15 and 20, Sonam Wangchuk has decided to defer his hunger strike."

"However, we have to see if they (MHA) involve us on July 20 for another round of talks. At the same time, we have to see if they include statehood and Sixth Schedule in the agenda or not. Because we don't want to remain entangled on the issue of unemployment. A lot of talks followed by action for jobs has already taken place," said Lakshmi.

On recent developments regarding the Buddhist spiritual

leader Thupstan Chibwang parting ways with LAC, he said, "We will resolve the issue soon."

Leh apex body announced that Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) has been spearheading a protracted agitation for statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh. The home ministry had earlier assured to hold the meeting on July 28, which according to LAC, has now advanced the date to July 20.

Following continued agitation by the people of Ladakh, the Union home ministry had formed a high-powered committee in 2023 under minister of state Nityanand Rai to discuss ways to protect Ladakh's unique culture, considering its location and strategic importance. During his visit to strategic region on June 30 and July 1 union home secretary Govind Mohan Rai met a delegation of the LAC and assured them that next meeting of the MHA with apex body and KDA will be convened soon. It may be stated here that Wangchuk has recently joined the Leh apex body and also agreed upon to represent high-powered committee and sub-committee during deliberations with the union home ministry.

HT Correspondent

lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Following a proposal by the BJP government at the Centre to pre-empt another round of talks over statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, co-chairman of the Leh apex body and former minister Derge Lakshmi, on Saturday announced that environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk has deferred his 35-day-long hunger strike.

Wangchuk, a newly elected member of the Leh apex body, had planned to go on hunger strike from July 15, if the Centre failed to hold talks with LAC and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) before July 15.

Addressing a press conference at Leh, Lakshmi said, "Since a new proposal has come from the Centre to hold talks on July 20 and there is no big gap between July 15 and 20, Sonam Wangchuk has decided to defer his hunger strike."

"However, we have to see if they (MHA) involve us on July 20 for another round of talks. At the same time, we have to see if they include statehood and Sixth Schedule in the agenda or not. Because we don't want to remain entangled on the issue of unemployment. A lot of talks followed by action for jobs has already taken place," said Lakshmi.

On recent developments regarding the Buddhist spiritual

leader Thupstan Chibwang parting ways with LAC, he said, "We will resolve the issue soon."

Leh apex body announced that Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) has been spearheading a protracted agitation for statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh. The home ministry had earlier assured to hold the meeting on July 28, which according to LAC, has now advanced the date to July 20.

Following continued agitation by the people of Ladakh, the Union home ministry had formed a high-powered committee in 2023 under minister of state Nityanand Rai to discuss ways to protect Ladakh's unique culture, considering its location and strategic importance. During his visit to strategic region on June 30 and July 1 union home secretary Govind Mohan Rai met a delegation of the LAC and assured them that next meeting of the MHA with apex body and KDA will be convened soon. It may be stated here that Wangchuk has recently joined the Leh apex body and also agreed upon to represent high-powered committee and sub-committee during deliberations with the union home ministry.

HT Correspondent

lettersh@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Following a proposal by the BJP government at the Centre to pre-empt another round of talks over statehood and Sixth Schedule to Ladakh, president of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, co-chairman of the Leh apex body and former minister Derge Lakshmi, on Saturday announced that environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk has deferred his 35-day-long hunger strike.

Wangchuk, a newly elected member of the Leh apex body, had planned to go on hunger strike from July 15, if the Centre failed to hold talks with LAC and Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) before July 15.

Addressing a press conference at Leh, Lakshmi said, "Since a new proposal has come from the Centre to hold talks on July 20 and there is no big gap between July 15 and 20, Sonam Wangchuk has decided to defer his hunger strike."

"However, we have to see if they (MHA) involve us on July 20 for another round of talks. At the same time, we have