

PRESS RELEASE NO- 964

Lamas and Anis from Leh called on the Governor

Itanagar, October 1: Twenty Lamas, including thirteen Ani (Buddhist nun) from Skitmang Gompa, Leh in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir called on the Governor General J.J. Singh and State First Lady Anupama Singh at Raj Bhavan on Oct 1 last , **reports PRO to Governor.**

The Governor welcomed them on behalf of people of the State and expressed his hope that the tour will be successful and fruitful.

Gen Singh opined that such visits will help the people from different parts of the country to know each other, their rich culture, dances and music and other traditions. While stating that it will also help in building cultural ties, former Chief of India Army appreciated the Army for arranging the tour for the Lamas and Anis.

Recalling his earlier visits to Ladakh region, Gen Singh appreciated the tourism in the region but added that greenery of Arunachal Pradesh is very special.

State First lady, who has been taking utmost interest in reviving the Thankha painting in the State discussed on preserving the art form which is very prevalent in Ladakh region.

The Lamas and Anis expressed gratitude to the first couple for the meeting. They made a tour of the Raj Bhavan compound and were very impressed by the initiatives of the Governor and the State First lady.

Officer in-charge of the tour, Lt. Abhijit Tomar of J&K Rifles informed that the tour is being organized by the Indian Army as part of Operation Sadbhavana. The 24-day tour includes visits to Delhi and Tawang. On 27th and 28th September the team visited the Tawang Monastery. Religious Teacher of 3 Ladakh Scouts Subedar Jamyang Tsultin, who is also the interpreters of the team, informed that to the visiting Lamas and Anis, it was a dream come true to be in the Tawang Monastery. They also visited the Ani Gompas of Tawang.

In the sideline of the meeting, while highlighting on the Operation Sadbhavana, Lt Tomar informed that Operation Sadbhavana of Indian Army aims to help the local population in remote and underdeveloped border areas in order to fulfilling their basic needs by providing medical aids, electrification, provisions of generator, books & furniture to school children, TV & DTH and numerous other projects which will change the outlook & life of the villagers. Excursion tours for school children and villages to various places all over India in order to increase their awareness and know the environment is one of such welfare project undertaken by the Army. With this objective, the Army in Jammu & Kashmir had planned to take an excursion tour of 20 Lamas of Eastern Ladakh to Tawang Monastery, Itanagar and New Delhi. The tour assumes

importance as the majority of these Lamas and Anis of Skitmang Monestary had never seen the places outside Leh. Skitmang is one of the villages in Nyoma Tehsil, Leh District in Ladakh region of Jammu & Kashmir. The village is located 148.7 km from district headquarters Leh.

Traditionally the Army defends the borders and, whenever called in, helps in counter-insurgency operations and provides aid to the victims of calamities. However, in many places, the Indian Army has extended its mandate to reach out to the people in remote places and in some case, rebuild the lives of people. Operation Sadbhavana (meaning Goodwill), launched in 1998, is an unique attempt to apply the healing touch to win the hearts and minds of people by promoting development activities focuses on their basic needs. Community development, vocational training to girls, adult education and empowerment of women are some of the important programmes under the project.

In Arunachal Pradesh, many medical camps and educational initiatives were taken up under the Operation Sadbhavana by the Army. Recently two RCC classrooms for Apna Vidya Bhavan constructed by the 26 Maratha Light were inaugurated by Maj Gen G S Katoch VSM, GOC 2 Mountain Division and 14 RAJPUT of Dah Division on 29 March 2011 initiated computer literacy project in Pongchou village of Tirap district are few of the many initiatives under the benevolent programme. It may be recalled that as a Raj Bhavan initiative, the department of Tourism in collaboration with Youth and Sports Affairs department and logistic support from the Armys 4 Corps, stationed at Tezpur, Assam, conducted a river rafting programme for school children at Poma area, 35 km from Itanagar on 29th July 2009. Thirty students, including seven girls from Sangay Lhaden Sports Academy, Chimpu participated in the event titled as Sadbhawna Rafting Programme, **adds the PRO.**

Sd/- Ome Tayeng Asst. PRO