



**Spirit of resilience:** Volunteers of Live to Love Foundation planting trees at Leh. The foundation set a new Guinness world record by planting 50,033 trees in a record time of 33 minutes and 25 seconds in Leh. A total of 9,313 people participated in the drive on Sunday. — Kamal Narang

## Ladakhis enter Guinness Records

Divya Trivedi  
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In a little more than two months after the devastating floods hit the Himalayan district of Leh, the people of the region created a world record by planting the most number of trees in a record number of time.

### NEW RECORD

In a drive organised by the Live to Love Foundation of the Drukpa lineage, 50,033 Ladakhi willows were planted in 33 minutes and 25 seconds, setting a new Guinness World record.

The feat was achieved in half the stipulated time by 9,313 people who came from villages across Ladakh. They broke the record set in Peru

earlier this year, where 27,166 saplings had been planted by 8,000 participants in an hour.

Though such plantations cannot affect the macro-climate of a zone, they can significantly alter the temperatures within the plantation area and the area around it, said Dr Balaji, Divisional Forest Officer, Leh.

"During the recent cloud-burst, plantations were able to stop boulders and mud, reducing the damage done to a place," said Mr Balaji. Willows help in arresting soil erosion to some extent and the root systems play an important role in holding the soil together, he added. The Leh district has a total area of 45,000 sq km, of which only 30 sq km or 0.006 per cent of land is under tree

cover. "So many people talk but do nothing. By this act of ours, we want to stress on action rather than praying. We have prayed for so many years, but not found much encouragement," said His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa, Head of Drukpa lineage and Live to Love initiatives.

The Drukpa lineage or lineage of the dragons, are followers of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition in philosophy. The plantation drive took place on the land owned by the Hemis Monastery in Leh.

### WAKE-UP CALL

"The recent tragedy in the month of August was unfortunate but it woke up the people of the arid region to the importance of plantations and

greenery," he said. "We were expecting 8,000 participants but close to 12,000 people turned up for the drive.

"We were overwhelmed. But more than the numbers, I think the purpose of the greater good of humanity through the green drive is more important," said Ms Tarika Vara, Adjudication Executive, Guinness World Record.

Many who could not get to plant the willows themselves, stood around below the great mountain ranges cheering the participants.

It was a picture of resilience through patience and hard work, the hallmark of the Ladakhi people's character, said Ms Sonam, a school teacher, who was coordinating and supervising the event.