

“The Battlefield Teaches Us Lessons of Leadership, Resilience and Service”: Lt Gen Satish Dua (Retd) at Ladakh Book Festival 2026



LEH, August 18, 2026: The fifth day of the Ladakh Book Festival 2026 at the NDS Memorial Sports Complex brought together children’s activities, military heritage, literature, youth engagement and cultural expression under the festival’s overarching theme, “Indian Military History: Valour and Wisdom.”

The day commenced with engaging activities for children, including “Clown Town Express” with Muskan & Farman, which brought fun and energy to the festival, followed by “Na yi Deb, Let’s Make a Book,” an interactive workshop led by Tsering Lhanzes.

The morning programme also featured the “Voice of Youth: Inter-School Debate Competition,” where students from Government Girls Higher Secondary School and Army Public School (APS) Lake presented arguments on the impact of technology on reading habits. The participating students were felicitated with book prizes and certificates for their thoughtful arguments, confidence and active participation.

The winners were felicitated by a distinguished gathering of guests, including Lt Gen Madan Raj Pandey, AVSM, SM, VSM, GOC 14 Corps; Lt Gen Satish Dua, PVSM, UYSM, SM, VSM (Retd); Dr Phunsog Angmo; Mrs Swati Pande, Zonal President, AWWA; Mrs Garima Mehta, Chairperson, Trishul FWO; Lt Gen D. P. Pandey, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd); Mr Ashok Dhankar, National Book Trust (NBT); and Maj Gen Sachin Mehta, VSM, GOC 3 Infantry Division.

A major attraction of the day was the opening of the “Know Your Army” Weapons & Equipment Display, which gave visitors an opportunity to gain a closer understanding of the equipment, preparedness and technological capabilities of the Indian Armed Forces. The display added an experiential dimension to the festival’s focus on India’s military history and contemporary defence preparedness.

The Ladakh Lit Fest 2026 was inaugurated today as part of the ongoing Ladakh Book Festival 2026, bringing together authors, scholars, military veterans, artists, students and literature enthusiasts under the theme “Valour and Wisdom.”

The literary programme featured the inaugural address by Lt Gen Madan Raj Pandey, General Officer Commanding, 14 Corps, who highlighted the significance of military history and Ladakh’s enduring place in India’s defence heritage.

He emphasised that military history was not merely a record of dates and battles, but a repository of lessons in leadership, endurance, strategic thinking, innovation and sacrifice.

Reflecting on Ladakh’s military legacy, Lt Gen Pandey recalled the courage displayed at Rezang La and Chushul, as well as the sacrifices made during the Kargil conflict.

He also underlined the role of books and reading in shaping young minds, noting that literature could broaden perspectives, ignite imagination and inspire young people to become responsible citizens. He further highlighted the Indian Army's enduring bond with Ladakh and its commitment to education, youth empowerment, cultural preservation and community development.

A key literary session of the day was "Life Lessons from the Battlefield" by Lt Gen Satish Dua (Retd). Drawing from his military experience, the session explored leadership, resilience, decision-making, courage, teamwork and service to the nation.

"The lessons of the battlefield go far beyond victory and defeat. They teach us leadership, courage, resilience, teamwork and the ability to remain steadfast in adversity. These are values that can guide our young people in their own lives and in building a stronger nation," said Lt Gen Satish Dua (Retd).

The festival also featured reflections on heritage, memory and storytelling by Dr Phuntsog Wangmo, who spoke about the role of books in preserving the stories and experiences that shape communities.

"Books give us a powerful way to preserve our heritage, document our history and ensure that these stories continue to inspire new generations. Growing up as a soldier's daughter, I saw the military as a way of life, and it was the stories of courage, sacrifice, service and resilience that stayed with me. It is through such stories that we truly understand our history," said Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo.

The day concluded with a vibrant cultural and musical programme, bringing together the spirit of Ladakh's heritage with the festival's celebration of literature, history and national service. The Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre presented a special band performance, creating a patriotic atmosphere and drawing enthusiastic participation from the audience.

The fifth day of the Ladakh Book Festival continued to reinforce the festival's central idea of bringing valour and wisdom together through books, conversations, military history, cultural traditions and the voices of young people.

The sixth day of the Ladakh Book Festival will continue with a diverse line-up of activities and literary sessions. The programme will include a Dance & Body Movement Workshop by Muskan & Farman, along with "Dza'sa – A Likir Pottery Workshop" by Rigzen Namgail and a Creative Writing Workshop by Team Rashtriya e-Pustakalaya.

The literary programme will feature "Honour & Betrayal: The Story of Gilgit-Skardu-Ladakh, 1947–48" with Col Ajay Raina (Retd), followed by "Ranks & Reflections" with Lt Gen Devendra Pratap Pandey, PVSM, USM, AVSM, VSM.

The day conclude with an evening musical performance by DA Shugs, adding another cultural dimension to the nine-day celebration of books, heritage, history and ideas in Ladakh.