

## **Secretary Sanjit Rodrigues Reviews Saspol Heritage Caves and Mulbek Chamba Heritage Site — Calls for Strict Preservation Measures**

Kargil, November 14, 2025: Administrative Secretary of Tourism & Culture and Housing & Urban Development, Sanjit Rodrigues, IAS, visited heritage conservation sites of Saspol Heritage Caves, and Mulbek Chamba heritage site.

At Mulbek Chamba, Secretary Rodrigues, accompanied by Deputy Secretary, Culture, Nazir Hussain Ladakhi, Deputy Director, Archives, Khadim Hussain, Executive Engineer TDA Kargil, Aga Sayed Mehdi, Executive Engineer, Kargil Project Division (CPWD), Sanjay Kumar Pal, Assistant Director, Tourism, Mohammad Ali Tak, Assistant Engineer, Ramanand, and officials from ASI and other concerned departments, assessed the condition of the site.

The Secretary emphasised the urgent need for conservation, stating that “the preservation of Ladakh’s heritage must be taken up seriously and without delay. Stating that such initiatives have taken a backseat for both lack of proper communication with stakeholders and undue interference, he urged to leave this job to experts. He added, “Much will pass and go, but we must ensure that these heritage sites are conserved for the next 500 years.”

Local representatives also presented demands for a footpath for devotees and a museum near the Chamba statue. Rodrigues directed the ASI and concerned agencies to review these proposals, stressing that all genuine local demands would be addressed as per requirement. He further instructed the PDD Department to shift obstructing electric poles and upgrade illumination to maintain authenticity and cultural aesthetics of the site. Unhappy with the work of ASI, a further review of the site with ASI is fixed for Monday 17th November.

During his visit to the Saspol Heritage Cave site, Rodrigues interacted with the Nambardar of Saspol, Tsewang Nurboo, President of Chochoks (Religious Head) Tsering Dorjey, and members of the Ama Tsokspa Association, including President Ladol Dolma and initiated the process of notification of the area as a heritage protected zone under the the Ancient Monuments and Preservation Act.

It was noted that cave preservation measures need to be carried out using proper technical methods and conforming to established heritage norms. Such techniques and capabilities would be possible through the Archaeological Survey of India and he informed that steps in this regard would be initiated soon. A reconnaissance visit of conservation experts from ASI has already been scheduled and requested for unhindered co operation of local village heads for what he called the protection of the Ajanta and Ellora of Ladakh.

The Village representative demanded for approach road for Monastery and pathway towards the Caves. The Secretary assured the villagers that every possible step would be taken to safeguard and develop the site, including protective wall and railing works in the next financial year. He also instructed the Revenue Department to prepare and submit the necessary land records to the Archives and Archaeology Department for heritage site notification.

At Khalsi, Secretary Rodrigues inspected the newly constructed Double-Storey Library and called for its early completion. He directed Senior Librarian Lobzang Suhail and the PWD Department to make the facility eco-friendly, solar-powered, and comfortable for readers. He also instructed the removal of old library structures to create a dedicated parking space for visitors.

Additionally, Rodrigues reviewed the ongoing construction of the Information Department Auditorium Building by CPWD. Executive Engineer Sanjay Pal briefed him about the layout and progress, assuring that the building would be completed and handed over to the Information Department by September 2026. The Secretary urged the executing agencies to meet the deadline and ensure high-quality construction.

Concluding his visit, Secretary Rodrigues reiterated the Administration’s commitment to Ladakh’s cultural and architectural heritage, stating, “You must allow us to carry out such work unhindered; we are committed to the betterment of the people of Ladakh.” He further added that a follow-up review meeting with all stakeholders will be convened shortly to monitor progress and ensure timely implementation of directions.



