

Two-day Drass Festival begins on an optimistic note, events held at multiple venues

Drass, September 4, 2026: Deputy Commissioner Drass, Imteeaz Kacho, today inaugurated the two-day Drass Festival 2026, celebrating the region's rich cultural heritage, sporting traditions, wildlife and scenic beauty.

Organised under the theme "Come, Celebrate, Experience", the festival aims to provide a platform to showcase the distinctive cultural traditions of Drass, promote tourism and encourage greater community participation in the region.

As part of the two-day festival, an eco-adventure/nature tour and brown bear sighting trek was held early this morning from Holiyal to Mushko in Drass. Deputy Commissioner Drass Imteeaz Kacho joined the tour, accompanied by SDM Drass Vishal Atri, other officials, wildlife enthusiasts, experts, college students and local residents.

The trek offered participants a unique opportunity to explore the region's rich wildlife and natural beauty, while promoting nature-based tourism and greater awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation.

Horse Polo, an important part of Drass's cultural identity and sporting tradition, remained one of the major attractions of the festival. The event, attended by Superintendent of Police, Ishtiyaz Kacho, Councillors Abdul Samad and Abdul Wahid, and other district officials, is being organised in collaboration with the Polo Association Drass at the International Horse Polo Stadium, Drass.

At the outset, the DC visited Kharbu Khar, where villagers showcased traditional ethnic food and a collection of old and traditional items showing the rich cultural heritage of the area. School children also presented a colourful cultural programme. The DC appreciated the villagers and students for their efforts towards preserving and promoting the local culture, traditions and heritage.

A volleyball match was also organised at PGCIL Station Drass, featuring a contest between Powergrid Drass and Ex-Servicemen Drass. The match was attended by SDM Drass, Vishal Atri, as the Chief Guest.

The festival also carries a strong social message of promoting a healthy and drug-free society. Under the theme "Say Yes to Life, Say No to Drugs", the event seeks to encourage young people to embrace sports, healthy lifestyles and positive activities while contributing towards a stronger and healthier community.

The festival features a wide range of activities, including cultural performances, horse polo, cricket, traditional sports and competitions, eco-adventure activities, literary and poetry session, awareness skits on drug abuse and solid waste management, local stalls and a cultural evening featuring music, dance and entertainment.

Several departments and organisations also set up stalls at the venue, showcasing various government schemes, welfare initiatives, handicrafts, local products and services. The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) also participated in the festival, providing legal awareness and information to visitors.

The District Information Office Kargil, in collaboration with Doordarshan, also organised an awareness camp at the festival venue to encourage youth to participate in the ongoing Gems of India Challenge and showcase the hidden and untold stories of Ladakh on a national platform.

The final event of the first day of the festival was held at the Tourist Dak Bungalow, Drass, featuring a Mushaira (poetry session) and a cultural programme. Local poets from different districts of Ladakh participated in the Mushaira, while cultural artists presented a colourful programme showcasing the rich and vibrant cultural heritage of Drass.

The event also provided an opportunity for local artisans, producers and community members to showcase their products, with ethnic food stalls and local stalls adding to the festive atmosphere.

A large number of locals and visitors, with thousands attending the festival, participated in the celebrations and activities, turning the event into a vibrant community gathering.

The festival seeks to further strengthen Drass's identity as a destination for culture, adventure, wildlife, sports and community-based tourism, while promoting the message of a drug-free, clean and progressive Drass.



