

L-G VK Saxena felicitates winners of Silk Route Ultra, Khardung La Challenge

477 ultra-runners participate in two high-altitude endurance races as part of 13th Ladakh Marathon



Leh, September 11: Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, today gave away medals to the winners of the “Silk Route Ultra” and “Khardung La Challenge”, organised as part of the 13th Ladakh Marathon.

A total of 477 ultra-runners participated in the 122-km Silk Route Ultra and 72-km Khardung La Challenge this year. The races test participants on the challenging high-altitude terrain of Ladakh, with the Khardung La Challenge taking runners towards the

world’s second-highest motorable pass – Khardung La – situated at an altitude of 17,618 feet.

Nawang Tsering of Ladakh Police, with a timing of 12 hours and 12 minutes and 18 seconds, won the 122-km Silk Route Ultra, claiming the first prize of ₹5 lakh. Suraj Meena from Rajasthan secured the second position and received ₹3.5 lakh, while Rigzen Gyurmeth of 2 Ladakh Scouts finished third and bagged ₹2.25 lakh.

In the 72-km Khardung La Challenge, Jigmet Stobdan of Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre (LSRC) emerged victorious, winning the first prize of ₹2.75 lakh. Shabir Hussain, also from LSRC, secured the second position and received ₹2 lakh, while Singay Angchok of 2 Ladakh Scouts finished third and was awarded ₹1.75 lakh.

The 13th Ladakh Marathon, being held from September 10 to 13, has attracted 7,500 runners from 28 States and 6 Union Territories, with international participants expected from all six inhabited continents. More than 3,000 family members also visited Leh during the event. Since its inception in 2012, the Ladakh Marathon has grown into a prestigious international sporting event and is recognised as the world’s highest AIMS-certified marathon.

This year’s edition carries a record ₹1 crore prize pool, the highest-ever prize commitment in the history of the Ladakh Marathon, announced by the UT Administration.

The marathon also contributed significantly to the local tourism economy, generating more than 70,000 bed nights. The 2026 edition contributed approximately ₹40–47 crore directly to the grassroots economy. The economic activity benefits local hotels, homestays, family-run guesthouses, taxi operators, restaurants, guides, traditional artisans and small businesses.

Congratulating the winners and participants, the Lieutenant Governor appreciated their determination and perseverance in taking on the demanding high-altitude races. He said the growing popularity of the two ultra races demonstrates Ladakh’s potential to emerge as a leading destination for high-altitude sports and adventure tourism.

The Lieutenant Governor said Ladakh’s high altitude, dramatic mountains, vast valleys and unique landscapes provide an exceptional setting for endurance and adventure sports.

“Ladakh Marathon stands as a shining model for responsible, sustainable tourism that empowers our communities while protecting our fragile ecology. This is the exact model of responsible tourism that

Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi emphasises upon - one that creates meaningful experiences and sustainable livelihoods and protects our fragile ecology, our lakes and mountains for the future generations," L-G Shri Saxena said.

The Lieutenant Governor appreciated the organisers, race officials, volunteers, local communities, medical teams, security personnel, government departments and all other stakeholders for their efforts in conducting the event.

He also appreciated the organisers for following a strict zero-single-use-plastic policy and involving local schools and communities in environmental initiatives, stressing that the growth of sports and adventure tourism must go hand in hand with environmental responsibility.

