

L-G VK Saxena inaugurates 11th Ladakh Zanskar Festival

Festival celebrates Zanskar's rich culture and new district status during maiden visit

L-G highlights improved connectivity and emerging opportunities in tourism, employment and local economy



Leh, September 15: Lieutenant Governor Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena today inaugurated the 11th Ladakh Zanskar Festival 2026, a vibrant celebration of the rich culture, distinct identity and immense tourism potential of the breathtaking Zanskar region. The two-day Zanskar Festival, held amid vibrant cultural celebrations and enthusiastic participation from local communities, is the first edition of the festival

since Zanskar attained district status in April this year.

The Lieutenant Governor inspected stalls and Doksa exhibitions showcasing local culture, crafts and products, and virtually inaugurated various infrastructure assets completed in Zanskar district. He also released 'Shesrab' – the Annual Magazine of Government Degree College Zanskar, and a special postal cover on "Gonbo Rangjon" in collaboration with India Post.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said district status was not merely an administrative change but a recognition of the long-standing aspirations and distinct identity of the people of Zanskar. "Today, as we celebrate the first major cultural festival of Zanskar as a new district, it is a moment of pride for all of us," he said, congratulating the people of Zanskar on the occasion.

Highlighting Zanskar's tourism potential, the Lieutenant Governor said its monasteries, mountains, rivers, trekking routes, adventure activities, traditions and warm-hearted people make it a destination with tremendous potential. He noted that the Ladakh Zanskar Festival has been included in the UT Administration's official tourism calendar, helping bring Zanskar's culture and tourism onto the wider tourism map.

He said more than 4.05 lakh tourists had visited Ladakh up to August 31, including over 3.71 lakh domestic and more than 33,000 foreign tourists. The growing tourist footfall, he said, translates into more business for hotels, homestays, taxis, restaurants, local shops and artisans, while also creating employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that tourism must grow in a sustainable, responsible and people-centric manner, with due respect for Zaskar's environment, culture and traditions.

On connectivity, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the Nimmu–Padum–Darcha (NPD) Road and NH-301 Kargil–Zaskar Highway, saying these projects would strengthen connectivity and open new opportunities for tourism, local businesses, artisans, drivers, guides and young entrepreneurs.

“These projects are not merely about building roads. They are infrastructure that can transform people's lives, the local economy and opportunities,” said L-G Saxena, while acknowledging the priority accorded to Ladakh's development by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji.

The Lieutenant Governor urged Zaskar's youth to preserve their cultural heritage while using digital platforms, social media and modern technology to showcase the region to the world and create new opportunities in tourism and entrepreneurship.



Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoon; Member of Parliament from Ladakh, Mohd Haneefa Jan; and several other public representatives and officials from the district administration were present on the occasion.