

**The Office of the Assistant Director, Tourism Department Leh, successfully organised a One-Day Rock Art Tour of Chiling to introduce tour operators to Ladakh's rich and ancient rock art heritage.**

Leh, November 26, 2025: The Office of the Assistant Director, Tourism Department Leh, successfully organised a One-Day Rock Art Tour of Chiling to introduce tour operators to Ladakh's rich and ancient rock art heritage. Designed exclusively for Leh-based tour operators, the initiative aimed to highlight the importance of safeguarding Ladakh's petroglyphs by fostering awareness, appreciation, and the thoughtful integration of rock art into tourism.

The day began with the registration of participants at the Office of the Assistant Director, Tourism Leh. A total of 25 tour operators joined the tour, accompanied by Khadim Hussain, Deputy Director, Archives; Dr. Tashi Ldawa, Associate Professor, EJM College; Viraf Mehta, Anthropologist and Rock Art Expert; Assistant Tourism Officer Stanzin Chondol, and staff from the Tourism Department.

At Sangam, the first stop, ATO Stanzin Chondol welcomed everyone, highlighting the objective of the tour, the cultural and historical significance of Ladakh's rock art, and the importance of integrating preservation efforts into tourism practices to safeguard these ancient sites for future generations.

This was followed by an in-depth session by Dr. Tashi Ldawa, who provided a comprehensive overview of the history of rock art in Ladakh. He emphasised that petroglyphs serve as invaluable historical records and form an integral part of Ladakh's cultural heritage. Khadim Hussain, Deputy Director, Archives Department, also addressed the group, speaking on the significance of petroglyphs, the need for their conservation, and the legal frameworks and acts under which they are protected.

Participants then visited 6–7 major petroglyph sites, including Choksti, Chutsan, and Waru, observing engravings dating back to the Stone and Bronze Ages.

Renowned anthropologist Viraf Mehta delivered an insightful presentation on the Rock Art of Ladakh at Chiling Village. Participants also toured the Serzo Museum, owned by Mr Ishey Namgial and family, which showcases the family's long-preserved tradition of crafting hand-beaten metal utensils—an enduring example of Ladakh's artisanal heritage. Following the museum visit, the participants also took the Constitution Day pledge in Chiling, reaffirming their commitment to the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Tsering Angchuk, representative of All Ladakh Tour Operators Association, extended his thanks to the Tourism Department for organising this first-of-its-kind initiative. He acknowledged the invaluable contributions of the resource persons and emphasised the collective responsibility to promote awareness about rock art conservation within the tourism industry. The tour concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Fatima Bano, Accounts Assistant, Tourism Department, who expressed gratitude to all participants and encouraged tour operators to incorporate the knowledge gained into their professional practices.



