

CEC Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo Attends National Tribal Fest 2025 in Leh, Emphasizes Need to Safeguard Ladakh's Indigenous Heritage

Leh, July 01, 2025 – Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) of LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo, attended the National Tribal Fest 2025 (Sas-Skyes Mi-Rigs Rgaston) held at the Central Asian Museum, Leh. The two-day event was organised by the Department of Social and Tribal Welfare in collaboration with the Tribal Research Institute, University of Ladakh, to celebrate and promote Ladakh's rich tribal culture and heritage.

The event was graced by Chairman/CEC of LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson, as Chief Guest, and CEC LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo, as Guest of Honour.

Both CEC Leh and CEC Kargil presented awards and certificates of appreciation to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to preserving Ladakh's tribal culture. CEC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo, specifically acknowledged and congratulated the contributors who have contributed in various fields in Kargil, appreciating their efforts in sustaining and promoting the region's rich tribal heritage.

The festival featured traditional music and dance performances, folk art exhibitions, cultural film screenings, and food stalls—offering a vibrant display of Ladakh's tribal identity. The dignitaries also visited exhibition stalls at Leh Main Market, where they interacted with local artisans and acknowledged their role in preserving traditional crafts and indigenous knowledge.

In his address, CEC Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo appreciated the organisers for hosting such a meaningful event and highlighted the importance of preserving Ladakh's tribal languages, oral histories, and traditional practices. He stressed the need for active documentation and intergenerational transfer of indigenous knowledge, which is at risk of being lost. He also expressed gratitude to the Central Government for its continued support and initiatives in promoting tribal welfare and inclusive development in Ladakh, which have helped bring attention to the unique needs and identity of the tribal communities in the region.

“These festivals help us reconnect with our roots. It's not just about celebration—it's about recognition, revival, and responsibility toward our heritage,” said Dr. Akhoo.

He also called upon policymakers and institutions to take concrete steps toward safeguarding tribal rights, promoting cultural education, and creating livelihood opportunities for tribal communities.

Chairman/CEC of LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson, in his brief remarks, underlined the significance of such events in fostering unity and pride among Ladakh's tribal population. He expressed gratitude to the Central Government for its continued support in tribal welfare after Ladakh became a Union Territory and emphasised the need for a socio-economic survey to ensure equitable development.

Secretary Social and Tribal Welfare, Shashanka Ala, welcomed the attendees and remarked that the festival is not only a celebration of culture, but also a platform for academic engagement, knowledge exchange, and cultural revival.

Deepali Mariskar, Director in the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, also shared her thoughts during the event and reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to inclusive growth and the long-term preservation of tribal heritage.

The event was attended by several dignitaries including Secretary Education Department, Banu Prabha; DC/CEO LAHDC Leh, Romil Singh Donk (IAS); SSP Leh, Shruti Arora (IPS), along with community leaders, cultural experts, scholars, and officers from across Ladakh.

A major highlight of the festival was the launch of the book *Kopong: History and Playing Techniques* by Angdu Khigu, celebrating the traditional Ladakhi game and its cultural importance.

The closing evening featured an engaging panel discussion on heritage conservation, followed by mesmerizing traditional performances at NDS Stadium, showcasing the enduring spirit of Ladakh's tribal communities.



