

## **LG Kavinder Gupta releases Streamlined SOPs for Procurement of Satellite Phones to enhance Tourism safety in Ladakh**

Leh, December 17, 2025: The Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Kavinder Gupta, today marked a major milestone in strengthening tourist safety and advancing Ladakh's adventure tourism ecosystem with the launch of a streamlined process enabling easy procurement of satellite phones for tourism purposes.

Ladakh, globally recognised for its vast remote landscapes, high-altitude adventure tourism, mountaineering expeditions, and off-grid travel experiences, has long faced communication challenges in areas with limited or no mobile connectivity. The operationalisation of satellite phone services for tourism is a significant step towards addressing these challenges, benefiting tourists, tour operators, and emergency response agencies alike.

Secretary, Tourism, Shri Sanjit Rodrigues informed that in 2022, the Ministry of Defence, Government of India, permitted the use of satellite phones for tourism purposes by tour operators in Ladakh, acknowledging the region's unique geographical and operational realities. Following this decision, the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh, proactively welcomed the initiative and took the lead in facilitating the operationalisation of satellite phone usage for the tourism sector.

Director, Tourism, Tsering Paldan shared that the Department of Tourism undertook sustained coordination and consultations with BSNL, Leh, to develop a clear, secure, and practical mechanism for procurement, ensuring full compliance with national security and telecommunications guidelines.

"These continuous efforts and detailed deliberations culminated in the issuance of a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) by BSNL on December 17, 2025, governing the procurement of satellite phones by private tour operators," said Director Paldan.

With the issuance of this SOP, tour operators can now directly approach BSNL, Leh, and procure satellite phones through an approved, transparent, and streamlined process, enabling timely access to reliable communication tools for operations in remote and high-risk areas.

This landmark development represents a first-of-its-kind initiative for Ladakh's tourism industry, significantly enhancing preparedness, safety standards, and operational confidence for tourism activities in remote regions. The availability of satellite phones is expected to greatly improve emergency communication, strengthen rescue coordination, and reinforce Ladakh's position as a responsible, safe, and globally competitive adventure tourism destination.

