

Secretary Tourism launches Holistic Homestay Support Framework

Leh, March 5: In a significant step towards strengthening community-based tourism in the Union Territory of Ladakh, the Holistic Homestay Support Framework was formally launched today by Administrative Secretary Sanjit Rodrigues, IAS, at the State Institute of Hotel Management (SIHM), Ladakh

The initiative marks a new and progressive phase in Ladakh's tourism journey, aimed at building sustainable, village-led tourism enterprises rooted in local communities.

The Holistic Homestay Support Framework has been developed through a collaborative effort between the Department of Tourism, UT Ladakh; the State Institute of Hotel Management, Ladakh; and the Firgun Social Initiative Foundation. It introduces a unified, department-led development system designed to ensure readiness, quality assurance and sustainability for homestays across the region.

Structured as a continuous development cycle, the key component of the initiative is the introduction of a comprehensive 21-day training curriculum for homestay operators designed to nurture skilled hosts who serve not only as hospitality providers but also as custodians of Ladakh's cultural and ecological heritage.

By strengthening capacities, improving service quality and enhancing guest experiences, the framework aims to position Ladakh's homestay network as a model of responsible and community-driven tourism.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Rodrigues underscored the importance of reinforcing Ladakh's homestay ecosystem as a key pillar of community-based tourism. He stated that the initiative represents a strategic shift from expansion to excellence in the tourism sector.

Emphasising the transformative vision behind the framework, he remarked that homestays must be viewed not merely as accommodation facilities but as structured rural enterprises embedded within village economies—creating sustainable livelihoods while preserving Ladakh's unique cultural identity and fragile ecological heritage.

Shri Rodrigues highlighted that the framework seeks to develop economically stable, culturally rooted and environmentally responsible homestays through enhanced service standards, structured capacity building, sustainability compliance, and continuous monitoring and mentoring support. He reiterated the Administration's commitment to ensuring that tourism growth in Ladakh remains inclusive, community-driven and environmentally sustainable.

The launch event witnessed the participation of key tourism stakeholders, reflecting a shared commitment to raising service standards and strengthening collaboration within the sector.

Among those present were representatives from the All Ladakh Tour Operators Association, including Ms. Rigzin Wangmo Lachic, and the All Ladakh Hotel and Guest House Association, represented by Shri Tsewang Namgyal.

Representatives of the Ladakh Scouts, including Lt. Col. Sudheer Sharma and Shri Vikram Chawla, also attended the programme, symbolising the enduring bond between Ladakh's institutions and its local communities.

The event further drew participation from CSR and development partners such as the State Bank of India, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), HDFC Bank, and Jammu & Kashmir Bank, along with the Ladakh Ecological Heritage Organisation.

Their presence highlighted growing institutional support for initiatives that integrate tourism development with environmental stewardship and community empowerment.

Also present on the occasion were Principal, SIHM Ladakh, Shri Ghulam Mohammad; Director Tourism, UT Ladakh, Shri Tsering Paldan; and Assistant Director Tourism, Leh, Ms. Padma Angmo, underscoring strong institutional commitment towards strengthening Ladakh's homestay ecosystem.

