

L-G VK Saxena inaugurates restored and redeveloped Choglamsar Protected Forest in Leh

L-G says Choglamsar Protected Forest to emerge as a model for ecological conservation and sustainable eco-tourism

Leh, May 25: Leh city today received its first public green space with the inauguration of the restored and redeveloped Choglamsar Protected Forest, on the banks of the River Indus. The redeveloped Forest, replete with nature-oriented recreational and public amenities like nature trail, nature park, cycle track, biodiversity and wellness zones, gazebo and viewpoints, has been restored in just 45 days, following the first visit of Lieutenant Governor Shri Saxena to the forest on 7 April 2026. The forest area was then in complete shambles with broken pavements, absence of basic amenities and degraded landscapes.

Recognising its immense ecological, environmental and social significance, Shri Saxena directed the redevelopment of the Forest area with amenities like pedestrian pathways, children's play area and public conveniences. Thereafter, the works started in a mission mode and within a short span of 45 days, the restoration and redevelopment works were completed. The upgraded facilities now include eco-friendly cycling tracks, dedicated children's play areas, gazebos, proper pedestrian pathways, resting spaces and study corners equipped with books and literature on wildlife and environmental conservation.

Spread over nearly 27 acres of land and located around 7 km from Leh city along the River Indus, the Choglamsar Protected Forest was established in the 1970s on a barren and erosion-prone land. Over the years, despite playing a crucial role in stabilising the Indus riverbanks, conserving soil, enhancing biodiversity and strengthening the fragile ecological balance of the Himalayan region, the forest area had fallen into a neglected state and required urgent restoration and upgradation.

Speaking on the occasion, Lieutenant Governor Shri Saxena described the Choglamsar Protected Forest as one of Ladakh's most valuable ecological treasures and said that the forest symbolises resilience, restoration and harmony between humanity and nature. "At a time when climate change poses serious challenges to fragile mountain ecosystems, Choglamsar Protected Forest stands as a powerful example of ecological restoration and environmental stewardship. Our objective is not merely to develop a park, but to create a model ecological destination rooted in the principle of 'Conservation First', where conservation, education, recreation and community participation coexist in harmony," L-G Shri Saxena said.

On the occasion, the LG also released a brochure on the Choglamsar Protected Forest highlighting its ecological significance, conservation objectives and management initiatives. Further, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed between the Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment and the University of Ladakh for undertaking comprehensive research-based engagement for conservation and propagation of the endangered Juniper species (*Juniperus semiglobosa*), which is the State Tree of Ladakh. Shri Saxena also formally released the new uniform code for forest and wildlife field staff of the Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment.

L-G Shri Saxena appreciated the dedicated efforts of the Forest Department, environmental experts, local stakeholders and all individuals associated with the preservation and restoration of the protected forest.



