

L-G VK Saxena approves constitution of “Ladakh Tourism Development Society”

New autonomous body would bring together the Government and private tourism stakeholders to drive the planned, coordinated, and sustainable development of tourism in Ladakh

Leh, June 1: In a significant step towards strengthening tourism promotion and steering the planned, coordinated and sustainable development of the tourism sector in Ladakh, the Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, has accorded approval for the constitution of the Ladakh Tourism Development Society (LTDS).

The establishment of LTDS addresses the need for a dedicated institutional mechanism that brings together government agencies, tourism stakeholders, local communities, and industry associations under a common platform for the holistic development of tourism in Ladakh. The Society will serve as the central agency for planning, promotion, regulation, coordination and implementation of tourism-related initiatives, while ensuring environmental sustainability, cultural preservation and community participation in Ladakh.

The LTDS will function as an autonomous, not-for-profit body under the overall administrative control and policy direction of the Department of Tourism and Culture. The Society will have the Lt. Governor as its Chief Patron, while the Chief Secretary will serve as the President and Secretary Tourism will be the Member Secretary.

“Tourism is a key pillar of Ladakh's economy and a major source of livelihood for our people. The constitution of the Ladakh Tourism Development Society aims at creating a professional, collaborative and future-ready institutional framework for the growth of the tourism sector. Through LTDS, we aim to bring together government agencies, tourism stakeholders, local communities and experts to ensure the growth of tourism in Ladakh in a sustainable, environmentally responsible and culturally sensitive manner. Our goal is to balance growth with environmental conservation and cultural preservation and ensure that the benefits of tourism growth are shared among its people,” LG, Shri Saxena said.

The major objectives of the LTDS include:

- · Preservation, protection and promotion of Ladakh’s unique cultural and natural heritage.
- · Strategic planning and policy support for tourism, adventure tourism, destination development, branding and marketing.
- · Promotion and regulation of tourism and adventure activities while ensuring safety, environmental safeguards and quality standards.
- · Development, operation and maintenance of tourism-related infrastructure and visitor amenities.
- · Promotion of festivals, cultural events, exhibitions, heritage celebrations and experiential tourism initiatives.
- · Strengthening Ladakh’s position as a premium destination for adventure, nature-based, spiritual, heritage and community-based tourism.
- · Capacity building, skill development and livelihood enhancement for local youth, guides, homestay operators, artisans and tourism stakeholders.
- · Promotion of wildlife tourism, curated thematic circuits, astro-tourism, eco-tourism and regenerative tourism models.
- · Liaison with Government of India, Foreign Embassies and High Commissions and International Cultural Organizations for collaboration to promote Tourism.
- · Acting as the designated implementation agency for tourism-related policies and schemes including the Homestay Policy, Mountaineering Policy, Adventure Tourism Policy and other incentive-based schemes.

To ensure effective governance, strategic oversight and efficient execution of its mandate, the LTDS will function through a three-tier structure comprising the Governing Body, Executive Committee and Finance Committee.

The Governing Body will be the apex policy-making and supervisory authority of the Society. The Governing Body will also include Secretaries of Finance and Law & Justice Departments, Deputy Commissioners/CEOs of LAHDC Leh and Kargil, as its Members. The Society will also comprise the President, All Ladakh Tour Operators Association; the President, All Ladakh Hotel & Guest House Association; the President, All Kargil Travel Trade Association; the President, Ladakh Mountain Guide Association and experts from tourism, hospitality, heritage, culture, wildlife and environmental sectors as its Members.

The Governing Body will be responsible for providing overall policy direction and strategic guidance and approving budget, infrastructure projects, long-term vision documents, annual action plans and major tourism initiatives. It will also monitor the performance of the Executive Committee and provide policy-level guidance.