

The Administration of Union Territory of Ladakh

Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat

Press Release

Hon'ble Lt Governor Brig (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd) holds meeting with tourism stakeholders, Chairmen of Hill Councils & UT Admin officials to discuss steps to promote tourism in UT Ladakh

Leh, March 13, 2025: The Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Brigadier (Dr) BD Mishra (Retd) held a meeting at the Lieutenant Governor's Secretariat with stakeholders from the tourism sector along with both chairmen of LAHDC Leh and Kargil and the concerned UT Administration officials to discuss steps for promoting tourism in UT Ladakh.

At the outset, the HLG, highlighting the need to promote tourism to increase the footfall of tourists in UT Ladakh, underscored the need for tourism stakeholders, both Hill Councils and UT Administration to work in close association with each other by integrating the efforts. Citing Goa's example, where the state witnessed a massive decline in footfall of tourists over the last few years, he emphasised taking immediate measures to ensure that tourism in Ladakh does not meet the same fate as Goa's as a large number of people in UT Ladakh are involved in tourism activities for their livelihood.

Informing the stakeholders about the reasons for the decrease in footfall of tourists in Goa, including geopolitical situation, exorbitant prices charged by taxi drivers and expensive food, accommodation and transportation, the HLG stated that necessary steps must be taken to inform the tourists about initiatives taken by the UT Administration for the welfare of tourists to ensure an increase in their footfall, viz. enforce law of the land, ask taxi drivers to be fair and honest, ensure hotel rates and services is up to the mark, promote budget-friendly tour packages through tour/travel agencies, ensure hotels follow transparent policies, promote Ladakh tourism at various places in India involved in tourism activities to boost the footfall of domestic tourists, invite foreign tourists/delegates and ensure their stay in homestays instead of hotels, improve quality of homestays, address the issue of dog menace, etc. The HLG also sought cooperation from the tourism stakeholders to realise the goal of making Ladakh a corruption and delay-free region along with timely payment of electricity bills by the general public; reducing the extraction of underground water and instead using surface water for drinking purposes to preserve drinking water for future generations and the need to take up the matter of exorbitant rates charged by private airlines with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, GoI, etc.

Secretary, Tourism and Culture, Vikram Singh Malik, IAS, gave a detailed presentation on the proposed action plan of the Tourism Department to promote tourism in UT Ladakh, including the preparation of a tourism festival calendar in consultation with both Hill Councils; the participation of tourism stakeholders in tourism tradeshows such as OTM and SATTE; Ladakh tourism branding at IGI Airport in New Delhi; holding mega events such as Ladakh Festival and Suru Festival in September and July 2025, respectively; holding familiarisation tour for delegates from different countries; engaging professionals for social and digital media handling for promotion of Ladakh tourism; holding winter and sporting events during the winter months; resolving tourist and stakeholders-related issues, etc.

Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Advocate Tashi Gyalson made several observations during the meeting such as the need for clearance from Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) for operating commercial flights at Thoise Airport; the need to improve parking bays at KBR Airport Leh along with filling the vacant slots and operating flights in the evening; the need to regulate ticket rates; extending PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana to commercial entities also; include rural areas while providing tourism-related incentives through Tourism Department; allow domestic tourists to visit Demchok village; airlifting stranded Ladakhi citizens at Srinagar, etc.

Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoun raised several points for the promotion of tourism in Kargil, including the need to simplify the registration process of tour agencies/hotels/guest houses by introducing a single window mechanism; the need to reinforce PMU Tourism staff at Kargil; provide subsidy to hoteliers for construction of new hotels/guest houses; the need to constitute a committee for the successful organisation of Suru Festival 2025; the need to introduce One UT One Permit for taxi drivers; the need to allow restrictive

movement for tourists in Mushkow Valley in consultation with Army; airlifting stranded passengers from Kargil from Jammu and Srinagar, etc.

Tourism stakeholders also made several suggestions to boost tourism in Ladakh, viz. maintain the status quo on the movement of taxis from Kargil district on tourist routes in Leh district as per the agreement signed before 2018; the need to address the issue of inadequate parking spaces in Leh town; the need to make wearing uniforms mandatory for commercial drivers; the need for UT Administration's support in organising and promoting Bikers Festival in September 2025 and the inclusion of dates of the said festival in Tourism calendar; the need for proper branding identity for Ladakh tourism; the need to ensure the safety of female travellers and availability of adequate public conveniences; the need to simplify the registration process for hoteliers/owners of guest houses; the need to introduce Film Tourism Incentive Policy; the need to organise familiarisation tour for foreign delegates at the time of Ladakh Festival/Suru Festival; the need to revive Wheel of Life project; increase the frequency of flights in Ladakh, etc.

Regarding the demand for One UT One Permit for drivers, the HLG stated that a consensus must be reached between the stakeholders from Leh and Kargil districts and asked both Chairmen of Hill Councils to hold a meeting with stakeholders from both districts in the presence of officials from UT Administration so that a decision is taken in this regard at the earliest. He also assured the tourism stakeholders of all possible help in promoting tourism in Ladakh. He asked tourism representatives from Leh and Kargil to meet the Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation and private airlines to discuss issues related to airfares, increasing frequency of flights and operation of flights in Thoise and Kargil, etc.

CEC/Chairman, LAHDC Leh, Adv Tashi Gyalsong; CEC/Chairman, LAHDC Kargil, Dr Mohd Jaffer Akhoun; Chief Secretary, Dr Pawan Kotwal, IAS; DGP Ladakh, Dr SD Singh Jamwal, IPS; Secretary, Tourism, Vikram Singh Malik, IAS; Secretary, Transportation, Bhupesh Chaudhary, IAS; DC Leh, Santosh Sukhadeve, IAS; DC Kargil, Balasaheb Suse, IAS; SSP Leh, Shruti Arora, IPS; Director, Finance, Dr Safdar Ali, IRS; Director, Tourism, Kunzes Angmo, JKAS; Assistant Director, Tourism from Leh and Kargil; president of All Ladakh Travel Trade Alliance, All Kargil Travel Trade Alliance; All Ladakh Tour Operators Association (ALTOA), All Ladakh Hotel and Guest House Association (ALHGHA); Taxi Union Leh, Taxi Union Kargil, Bikers Association, etc joined the meeting physically and virtually.



