

## **Ethnic Food Festival 'Mamani' Celebrated in Kargil; CEC Attends as Chief Guest**

Kargil, January 24, 2026: The Hon'ble Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor (CEC), LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoo, today attended the Ethnic Mamani Food Festival as Chief Guest, organized by the Himalayan Cultural Heritage Foundation in collaboration with the Tribal Research Institute, University of Ladakh, Kargil Campus.

The festival showcased a wide variety of traditional food items prepared from locally sourced products through multiple stalls, reflecting the rich ethnic food heritage of the region. The CEC appreciated the participants for their efforts and encouraged them to further widen the scope of the festival. He lauded their dedication and valuable contributions towards preserving and promoting Ladakh's diverse traditional food culture.

The event commenced with the National Anthem and a traditional Khataq welcome. The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Jaffer Ali, who welcomed all dignitaries and highlighted the significance of the Ethnic Mamani Food Festival of the Purig tribal community. He also outlined the objectives, developmental initiatives, and vision of the Tribal Research Institute, University of Ladakh, towards preserving and promoting tribal culture and traditions of Ladakh.

Dr. Akhoo specially appreciated Anayat Ali Shotopa for initiating and consistently promoting such cultural food festivals. He also expressed gratitude to the Himalayan Cultural Heritage Foundation (University of Ladakh) and extended special thanks to the Vice Chancellor, University of Ladakh, Prof. Saket Kushwaha, for his significant contribution towards strengthening education and research in Ladakh.

While addressing the gathering, the CEC highlighted the historical evolution of traditional food practices and emphasized the importance of remaining connected to local culture, language, and heritage. He stated that such initiatives provide a vital platform to revive and preserve cultural identity, traditions, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Dr. Akhoo also drew attention to the rising medical complications in modern times, attributing them largely to changing lifestyles and food habits. He observed that ancestors suffered fewer health issues due to pure traditional diets, active lifestyles, and the medicinal value of indigenous foods, whereas present-day diets are increasingly affected by chemical additives. He also stressed the need to promote the Mamani Food Festival on a larger and collective scale and to restore the importance of traditional food practices in daily life.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, Imteeaz Kacho, in his address, appreciated Anayat Ali Shotopa for his sustained efforts in preserving and promoting cultural and food festivals. He emphasized the health benefits of local food and stated that such festivals encourage awareness, interaction, and renewed interest in traditional dietary practices. He also appreciated the Himalayan Cultural Heritage Foundation and Tribal Institute, University of Ladakh, under the leadership of Dr. Jaffer Ali.

Brigadier 121, Ashish Joshi, while addressing the gathering, highlighted the importance of festivals that honor ancestors and respect elders, stating that such cultures remain alive and resilient. He expressed concern over deteriorating food habits among the younger generation and said that initiatives like the Mamani Food Festival help sustain healthy traditional food practices.

Additional Superintendent of Police, Kargil, Kacho Ishtiyag, appreciated Anayat Ali Shotopa and spoke on the cultural importance of the Mamani festival. He also drew parallels with other festivals like Lohri, celebrated during the same period in Jammu, and suggested that there is scope for research to identify cultural commonalities.

Anayat Ali Shotopa, while welcoming the dignitaries, expressed gratitude for their presence and thanked all participants and stall presenters. He requested the Hon'ble CEC to include the Mamani Food Festival in the official tourism festival calendar. He also acknowledged the contributions of former Chief Executive Councillor Kacho Ahmed Khan in promoting local food festivals.

Mohd Ali Waziri highlighted the historical and cultural significance of the Mamani Food Festival, detailing individual traditional food items, their health benefits, and the geographical regions where the festival is celebrated.

Students from the Department of Anthropology, University of Ladakh, also presented insights into the cultural importance of the Ethnic Mamani Food Festival.

The vote of thanks was presented by Dr. Mehboob Ali, In-charge Administrator, University of Ladakh.

The event was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Kargil Imteeaz Kacho, Brigadier 121 Ashish Joshi, Additional Superintendent of Police Kargil Kacho Ishtiyag, Dy Commander Hari Chandra, Joint Director/Chief Controller of Finance Iftikhar Hussain, Dr. Mehboob Ali (In-charge Administrator, University of Ladakh), Dr. Jaffer Ali (University of Ladakh), DySP Syed Riyaz, along with scholars, officials, participants, and other dignitaries.





