

Ladakh Festival 2026 to present grand pan-India cultural showcase

Secretary Tourism & Culture Sanjit Rodrigues briefs media on Festival Preparations

Leh, September 25, 2026: Preparations for the annual Ladakh Festival 2026 have been completed, with this year's festival set to present a vibrant pan-India cultural showcase featuring traditional and contemporary performances, handicrafts, cuisine, photography, films, polo and archery.

Briefing the media today, Secretary Tourism & Culture, UT Ladakh, Shri Sanjit Rodrigues, said that the festival has been designed to provide a wider national platform to Ladakh's rich cultural heritage while bringing together cultural troupes and artists from different parts of the country.

He informed that the 25-member Shillong Chamber Choir has arrived in Leh and is currently rehearsing for the inaugural ceremony, which will be inaugurated by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh. He expressed hope that the choir's performance would add a special dimension to the opening ceremony and make the inauguration a memorable experience for the people and visitors.

A 14-member cultural troupe from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands has also arrived in Leh and is rehearsing for performances scheduled during the three-day festival.

As part of the effort to promote an integrated approach to Indian culture, the festival will also feature a fusion concert by the North Zone Cultural Centre (NZCC). A 47-member team representing different States of the Northern Zone will participate in the programme. The Secretary expressed gratitude to the North Zone Cultural Centre for supporting the initiative and bringing the large contingent to Ladakh.

Shri Rodrigues said that the festival will also provide a platform for artists from across Ladakh, with each district presenting its own cultural troupe and performances by prominent local artists. The initiative aims to create a comprehensive pan-Ladakh cultural showcase at the Polo Ground.

A Ladakhi handloom and handicraft showcase is being set up at the Leh Market, along with a food court showcasing authentic Ladakhi cuisine. These initiatives aim to provide visitors and tourists an opportunity to experience and appreciate Ladakh's traditional food, handloom and handicraft products.

The festival will also feature exhibition polo matches at Chushot Polo Ground and an archery competition in Leh. For the first time, the Ladakh Festival Archery Cup is being introduced, with each district being asked to nominate two of its best teams. The competition will feature a rolling trophy, with the best archery team in Ladakh being selected annually as part of the festival. The initiative seeks to highlight archery as an important traditional sporting heritage of Ladakh.

A photo exhibition and film screenings will also be organised at the Polo Ground, while an exhibition at Ranthang Art Gallery in Leh Market will showcase local art and photography. Films by Ladakhi artists and photography showcasing Ladakh are also being promoted as part of the festival programme.

The Secretary further said that the festival is being promoted as a collective cultural experience for tourists as well as the people of Ladakh. Hotels, restaurants, cafés, homestays and other hospitality partners have been encouraged to promote the festival and facilitate the participation of tourists.

He also highlighted an important change in the festival programme this year, stating that the traditional procession and evening programme have been integrated. Nearly 1,000 artists and participants are expected to take part in the procession. The decision to combine the two programmes was taken following suggestions received from stakeholders, with the objective of encouraging people to participate in both the procession and the evening cultural programme.

The Secretary expressed hope that Ladakh Festival 2026 would provide a vibrant platform for cultural exchange, promote Ladakh's traditional heritage and offer visitors an opportunity to experience the diverse cultural traditions of Ladakh and different parts of India.

