

Representative of WWF India calls on Chief Secretary, UT Ladakh

Leh, January 30: Mr Rigzin Dawa, Senior Programme Officer, WWF India, today called on Ashish Kundra, at the Secretariat, Leh, and discussed matters related to wildlife conservation, community livelihoods, and sustainable tourism initiatives in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

During the meeting, the representative briefed the Chief Secretary on various conservation and livelihood-linked initiatives being implemented across the region, including the Changthang visioning exercise, rangeland governance mechanisms, livelihood-based interventions, human-wildlife conflict mitigation measures, and scientific studies undertaken in Changthang, Drass, Zaskar, and the Sham region.

The discussion also focused on strengthening institutional mechanisms to support long-term, structured engagement in the areas of wildlife conservation, sustainable livelihoods, and responsible tourism in Ladakh.

During the interaction, the Chief Secretary suggested the conceptualization of a Ladakh Wildlife Foundation, envisaged as a platform involving stakeholders from the tourism sector, wildlife operators, and conservation practitioners. The proposed platform would aim to promote responsible tourism and conservation awareness, while ensuring ecological sustainability in the region.

Issues related to the standardization of tourism practices and Pashmina-based value chains, aligned with ongoing WWF India livelihood initiatives, were also discussed, with emphasis on value addition, quality standards, and strengthening market linkages in an ecologically responsible manner.

The Chief Secretary further suggested exploring the organization of a wildlife confluence in Ladakh, bringing together tourism stakeholders, wildlife operators, conservation organizations, and policymakers to develop replicable guidelines for wildlife-linked tourism, suited to Ladakh's unique ecological context.

The Chief Secretary appreciated the efforts being undertaken and emphasized the need for coordinated institutional approaches and stakeholder engagement to ensure conservation-led development in the Union Territory.

