Ladakh launches India's first high-altitude snow leopard safari

Environment · 8 October 2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/10/08



News

During Wildlife Week, Lt Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena flagged off six specially designed open vehicles for India's first high-altitude snow leopard safari at Leh on 7 Oct 2026. It is run by the SHAN Society with Ladakh's Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment. First areas: Rumbak, Shang and Uley.

Key facts

Launch	7 Oct 2026, Leh – LG Vinai Kumar Saxena
First areas	Rumbak, Shang, Uley
Next routes	Hemis NP, Changthang, Karakoram WLS, Nubra, Zanskar, Kargil, Drass
Population	India about 718; Ladakh 477 (highest)
Scientific name	Panthera uncia
Aims	Responsible tourism, community conservation, local livelihoods

Background

- Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPAI), released in 2024: 718 in India – Ladakh 477, Uttarakhand 124, Himachal 51, Arunachal 36, Sikkim 21, J&K 9.
- Protection: IUCN 'Vulnerable'; Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972. State animal of Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh. 'Project Snow Leopard' began in 2009.

- Geography: Hemis National Park is India's largest national park and called the 'snow leopard capital'. Ladakh is a cold desert in the Trans-Himalaya.
- Polity: under the J&K Reorganisation Act 2019, Ladakh became a Union Territory without a legislature on 31 Oct 2019, run by a Lieutenant Governor.
- Wildlife Week: 2–8 October in India, an initiative of the Indian Board for Wildlife (1952); observed as a week since 1955 (2024 was the 70th Wildlife Week).

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu's State animal is the Nilgiri tahr – 'Project Nilgiri Tahr' began in 2023. The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (1986) is India's first; the State has the Mudumalai, Anamalai, Kalakad–Mundanthurai, Sathyamangalam and Srivilliputhur–Megamalai tiger reserves.

Shanmugam IAS Academy – your next step

- **Courses:** TNPSC Group 1, 2 / 2A (Prelims + Mains), Group 4, UPSC / IAS – Coimbatore · Madurai · Online – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/fees
- **Books (PDF):** TNPSC PYQ books, UPSC books – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/study-materials
- **Free quiz + daily PDFs:** https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/free-pdf-download · All news of this day: https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/10/08

Admissions – call / WhatsApp: 99941 46662 · 99944 27714 · www.shanmugamiasacademy.in