

Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDC) (Amendment) Regulation, 2026

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Why in news?

Ladakh is all set to hold elections to eight hill councils for eight districts as President Droupadi Murmu promulgated the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (LAHDC) (Amendment) Regulation, 2026.

- **Bifurcation Background** - Ladakh was carved out as a Union Territory in 2019 from the Kashmir division of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Prior to 2019, Ladakh had only two hill councils, one in the Muslim-majority district of Kargil and another in the Buddhist-majority district of Leh.
- However, the L-G administration has created eight districts this year.

Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Councils (Amendment) Regulation, 2026

- **Purpose** - To align local governance laws with the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, which originally established Ladakh as a distinct Union Territory.

Key Provisions & Structural Changes

- **Establish hill councils in all 8 districts** - The amendment establishes the Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) in all eight districts of Ladakh.
- Previously, elected hill councils operated only in Leh and Kargil.
- The framework will now cover the six newly created districts - Sham, Nubra, Changthang, Zaskar, Drass, and Sankoo.
- **Council size** - The number of constituencies in each council has been rationalised from the earlier 26 seats to between seven and 24 seats.
- The councils will exercise district-level Panchayat powers, while district plans will have to adhere to administrative guidelines, and their bye-laws will require approval from the administration.
- **Targeted nomination** - It also provides for nomination of four members representing women and unrepresented communities for greater people's participation in the local governance.
- **Ex-Officio representation** - The sitting Lok Sabha Member of Parliament (MP) representing Ladakh will serve as an ex-officio member across all district hill councils.
- **Terminology & control upgrades** - Legal terms have been streamlined to swap

references to "state" and "governor" with "Union Territory of Ladakh" and "administrator", respectively.

- **Electoral oversight** - The State Election Commission for the Union Territory of Ladakh will maintain full superintendence over council electoral rolls and polling & the councils hold a fixed five-year term from their first meeting.
- **Legal recourse** - Any election-related disputes must be settled by filing a petition directly before the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh within 45 days of the result declaration.



References

1. [The Hindu | President promulgates LAHDC Regulation](#)
2. [Hindustan Times | Ladakh LG notifies amendment for hill development councils](#)