



KHARDUNGLA CHALLENGE (17,618 ft.)

The Ultimate Endurance Race



11th Edition - Friday 6th September 2024

RUNNERS INFORMATION GUIDE

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About Khardung La Challenge

The Khardung La Challenge is the one of the highest ultra-marathon in the world.

The challenge covers a distance of 72km and for more than 60km of the course you are running at an altitude above 4000m.

This awe-inspiring challenge, where the scenery changes every passing hour and km, is the ultimate endurance test of the human body.

Participants are rewarded with spectacular views of the East Karakoram Mountain range and the Stok Kangri Massif.

It has been described as one of the toughest ultra-marathon by runners over the past decade.

Altitude and Acclimatization

Running at an altitude tests the limits of one's endurance, hence proper acclimatization becomes imperative. Altitude gain affects everyone and depends entirely on one's body condition as some acclimatize very fast and some take several days. With proper acclimatisation, altitude should not be an issue, which is why we recommend participants of this challenge arrive at least 10 days ahead of race day to prepare themselves. And once you have arrived in Leh, do not train too hard, too soon, and maintain the pace.

For more information on altitude sickness and running, we recommend that all participants read the following articles.

<https://www.himalayanclub.org/downloads/healthy-in-high-himalayas.pdf>

<https://www.runnersworld.com/advanced/a20803047/altitude-training-for-everyone/>

Checklist

Whether you are a returnee or a first-time participant, here's a checklist to ensure a safe run!

- Read the Runners' Information guide in its entirety.
- Schedule to arrive in Leh as per [bib collection dates](#) at a minimum of 10 days ahead.
- Once you have arrived in Leh please ensure to contact the Ladakh Marathon team at the Rimo Expeditions office or Ladakh Marathon Hub.
- Ensure that you have undergone the medical check in Leh which is for your own safety.
- Ensure you have proper clothing as per our [guideline](#)
- Familiarize yourself with the route map of this challenge.

- Ensure that you have provided the organizers with emergency contact and medical details.
- **All participants must report at 8:00 AM on 5th September (Thursday) at the NDS Memorial Stadium (Sports) Ground Leh , as race briefing will start AT 8:15 AM.**
- **Portable oxygen is not allowed on race day. Participant will be disqualified if found using supplementary/portable oxygen.**
- **During the race if the vitals of a participant are found to be abnormal then our medical team will have the right to pull you out of the race. Their decision is final and binding.**

Route, Timing and Cut-Off time

This race will start at 3:00am on Friday 6th September from the village of Khardung which is located at an altitude of 3975m.

Most of the course is on the Black top road, except for some sections between North Pulu (Nubra side) and South Pulu (Leh side), which is a rough road. It will be daylight when most of the participants cross this section.

The race route follows a gentle but steady climb to the top of Khardung La (5370m), one of the highest motor-able passes in the world. From here it is a downhill all the way to the finish point in Leh town at 3504m.



Stage-wise cut-off is as under:

Cut-off point	Time	Altitude Gain/Loss	Stage
Khاردung La top 32.2km	11 am / 8 hours	+1396m	I
South Pulu 46.5km	1:30 pm / 10 hours 30 minutes	-708m	II
Mendhak Mor (turn) 58.6km	3 pm / 12 hours	-590m	III
Finish point 72km	5 pm / 14 hours	-565m	IV

This is a timed race. Please ensure that your timing chip is fastened securely to your running bib. Your net running time can only be measured if you step on the timing mats laid out at the start and finish line. Likewise, you must step on all mats laid out en route the marathon course. You will be disqualified if your intermediate times are not recorded.

Please note that the cut-off points and timings are subject to change, should the organizer deem it to be necessary. If you have not reached the cut-off points within the given time, you MUST leave and retire from the race immediately, inform the nearest race official/volunteer and get on to a sweep vehicle. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

Protected Area Permit (PAP)

- All participants require a permit which is obtained by the organizers of the event from the District authorities of Leh.
- Citizens of Afghanistan, Burma, China, Pakistan, Diplomatic Passport, UN Passport, International Passport, Official Passport/Visa, Journalist Passport/Visa and foreign nationals having their origin in the mentioned countries are not granted this permit in Leh and would continue to require prior approval of the Ministry of Home Affairs before their visit to Ladakh.



Medical check-up

“Participant safety is of utmost importance to us” - the medical check-up is organized with this in mind.

A pre-medical check-up for participants will be held on 5th September after you have arrived in Khardung village. The organiser reserves the right to disallow/disqualify any participant who is known or suspected to be physically unfit for this Ultra run. At any point should you feel unsure of your ability to complete this challenge or physically not well, we recommend you to take advice from our team.

Bib and race kit collection

This is a timed race with timing chips.

It is the responsibility of participants to collect their Bib and race kit in timely manner. **It is mandatory for all participants to collect bibs in person.** All participants must provide acceptable proof of identification such as Passport / Aadhaar / Driving License etc.

BIB distribution dates are 27 th and 28 th August ONLY from 10:00 am to 6:00 pm.

Venue is Ladakh Marathon Expo at the indoor stadium of NDS Memorial Stadium (Sports) Leh.

Your race kit includes running bib (two – for front and back) with timing chip, baggage tags, set of Thermal wear (upper and lower), official Khardungla Challenge T-shirt, Windproof jacket, and Ultra Sun Hat.

Kindly ensure that your running BIB is pinned properly on front and back and clearly visible at all times on race day. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

Getting to the start point

All Participants will have to report on Thursday 05th September at 8:00 am at the NDS Stadium Ground Leh where race briefing will be conducted.. Please ensure that you report timely. Participants are transported to the race starting point at Khardung village. To support the local villagers, accommodation in Khardung Village is in local home stays/tented accommodation which has basic clean amenities. **Participants who do not report in time will have to reach Khardung village on their own.**

No family member/friend/support crew is allowed to accompany or stay with participants in Khardung Village. If a participant travels to Khardung Village in advance for acclimatisation, then he/she will have to return to Leh and report at the NDS Stadium on Thursday 5 th September at 8:00am to attend race briefing and travel together.

Travel time from Leh to the village of Khardung is approx. 3 hrs and participants need to carry light packed lunch and water for the day. On arrival in Khardung village participants are given high tea and snacks followed by an early dinner. Early morning breakfast is provided on race day. Medical checkup will be conducted upon arrival in Khardung by official race medics.

Race day weather and clothing guide

Participants of Khardungla Challenge can expect temperatures in Khardung village to be about 1° to 2° Celsius at start time of 3:00 a.m. In case of bad weather, temperatures can go below freezing point to as low as minus 10° to 14° Celsius. In year 2018 temperatures at Khardungla top had dropped to -14° Celsius. It is not only the participants, but the volunteers too who have to endure the conditions of providing aid for nearly eight hours at 17,618 ft.

As you descend from Khardungla top to Leh, the temperatures should go up to about 10° to 15° Celsius or more, depending on the weather conditions.

Please do go through the clothing check-list here. Participants are required to arrange for the following items themselves:

1. Headlamp
2. Sleeping bag
3. Gloves
4. Warm cap
5. Light rain jacket
6. Thermal wear
7. Hydration pack

Headlamps and Sleeping bags can be hired at nominal charges from several outdoor gear stores in the Leh market.

Baggage drop

Along the course there will be 3 places to layer off and baggage needs to be dropped off as under:

Layer off point	Baggage drop point
North Pulu	Khardung village
Khardung La top	NDS Stadium – 5 th September – at briefing time
South Pulu	NDS Stadium – 5 th September – at briefing time

Please make sure you have properly labeled your belongings with the baggage tag, provided in your race kit. Participants will receive a counter file of the baggage tag to reclaim their belongings.

Belongings can be collected at the Finish point. For further assistance contact our Volunteers.

Facilities along the route

There will be 14 aid stations in total along the course of Khardung La challenge. Hydration and Aid stations will be located at every 5 km interval. The aid stations will provide water, energy and hot drinks along with nutritious snacks. Participants are requested to carry their own hydration pack as bottled water will not be provided and instead there will be refill facilities at the aid stations by our hydration partner

[Bisleri Vedica - Himalayan Spring Water](#)

Medical facilities along this ultra-marathon course are provided by the Indian Army – 14 Corps, Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre, ITBP and administration of the U.T. of Ladakh. Ambulances with team of doctors and medics will be plying along the route to take care of any medical emergency. Toilet facilities (environment friendly dry pits) will be available at 6 locations along the ultra-marathon course.



Finish line and Certification

The finish point is Leh Main Market, Leh. We ask all participants to respect the finish line area and ensure that celebrations do not interfere with other participants' finish line experience.

There will be Doctors and Physiotherapists for the participants at finish point .

Award/Podium ceremony at Finish Line

Top three (03) winners of each category will be given a podium ceremony at the finish point on 6 th September.

Fresh hot lunch is served at finish point by our hospitality partner [The Grand Dragon Ladakh](#)

All Finishers are felicitated with the Finisher Medal. Finish timing will be available same day and finisher certificate after one week. Finisher's Jacket will be sent by post by mid-November.



