

Ladakh set to emerge as India's Sea Buckthorn Capital, says LG Kavinder Says new Centre of Excellence to boost Ladakh's Rural Economy PM Modi's vision for sea buckthorn development takes shape in Ladakh Asks youth to harness opportunities and play role in region's economic growth Ladakh youth should become job creators, not job seekers

Leh, December 4: Ladakh has the potential to emerge as India's Sea Buckthorn Capital, owing to its vast natural reserves, favourable high-altitude conditions, and its status as the largest sea buckthorn-growing region in the country. This was stated by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Kavinder Gupta, after inaugurating the Centre of Excellence for Sea Buckthorn at Nimoo today. He said the Centre marks a major leap in scientific farming, processing, and organised value-chain development, and will play a transformative role in empowering farmers, modernising agriculture, and positioning Ladakh at the forefront of sea buckthorn innovation.

Addressing the gathering, Shri Kavinder Gupta highlighted that while Ladakh accounts for nearly 64% of India's sea buckthorn cultivation area, the actual production remains low due to traditional practices, irregular harvesting, and lack of structured processing facilities. The Centre of Excellence, he said, has been established to bridge these gaps through advanced research, training, and capacity-building initiatives.

The Lt Governor emphasised that the Centre is not merely a research hub but a comprehensive platform for farmers, FPOs, SHGs, women entrepreneurs, and youth to upgrade skills, adopt scientific methods, and explore new income-generating avenues. He stressed that the initiative will significantly enhance production quality, ensure climate-resilient agriculture, and unlock Ladakh's potential in high-value product development such as juices, oils, nutraceuticals, cosmetics, and herbal medicines.

Recalling the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's repeated references to sea buckthorn in his Mann ki Baat programme, Shri Kavinder Gupta said the Prime Minister has recognised its powerful medicinal properties and described it as a symbol of Ladakh's ecological strength. He added that the Prime Minister's vision has greatly encouraged Ladakh to adopt scientific and organised approaches for developing sea buckthorn on a larger scale.

The Lt Governor further noted that sea buckthorn plays a crucial role in soil conservation, combating land degradation, and supporting sustainable rural livelihood. With the establishment of the Centre, Ladakh aims to collaborate with national and international research institutions and industries to strengthen its value chain and develop a global market for sea buckthorn products, thereby benefiting local farmers and entrepreneurs.

Shri Kavinder Gupta stressed that the UT Administration is committed to ensuring that the economic benefits of sea buckthorn reach villages and households directly, making every family a stakeholder in Ladakh's growth. Calling for active participation from local communities, he said the success of the initiative depends on their involvement in cultivation, harvesting, processing, and entrepreneurship.

The Lt Governor urged the youth of Ladakh to move beyond dependence on government jobs and become innovators and job creators. Highlighting the immense opportunities in sectors such as value addition, food processing, nursery development, eco-tourism, agri-startups, packaging, and marketing, he encouraged young entrepreneurs to take advantage of schemes like Start-Up India, Stand-Up India, PMEGP, and Mudra Loans. He said Ladakhi youth can play a key role in building a self-reliant and prosperous regional economy. Later, the Lt Governor released a book on Sea Buckthorn authored by DIHAR Director Dr OP Chaurasia, Director of Horticulture Department Dr Tsewang Phuntsog and Dr Stobdan from DIHAR.

Earlier, Administrative Secretary Bhupesh Chaudhary mentioned that the Centre of Excellence for Sea Buckthorn was initially conceptualised in 2019, which was later sanctioned by the Government of India for Rs 7.89 crores. He also highlighted the medicinal properties of sea buckthorn, especially its anti-oxidant properties, with the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India often labelling it as Sanjeevani Bhooti. He also mentioned that the sea buckthorn, which grows in the wild, is not cultivated by farmers and efforts are being made to encourage farmers to grow sea buckthorn in fields for its economic benefits. He informed about trainings provided to farmers at this centre along with the establishment of Food Processing Unit at the site.

Earlier, Chief Horticulture Officer Leh Kunzang Wangmo welcomed the guests while Chief Horticulture Officer Kargil Raza Ali delivered the thank you note. Joint Director, Agriculture, Thinles Dawa; Additional Secretary, Horticulture & Agriculture, Mohd Usman Khan, progressive farmers and officials from Horticulture and Agriculture departments were among those present in the event.



