

L-G VK Saxena operationalises Igoo–Phey Irrigation Canal in Leh, releases water to boost irrigation and water security *Reiterates commitment towards water security, agricultural growth and prosperity in Ladakh*

Leh, May 15: The Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, today formally released water in the historic Igoo–Phey Irrigation Canal at Martselang in Leh, marking the commencement of the irrigation season for 2026. The canal, which was heavily silted and in a dilapidated state, has been restored, de-silted and cleaned in a record time of just 20 days since the Lieutenant Governor visited the canal on April 25. The Lieutenant Governor had then directed the officials to repair and clean the canal by May 15 so that it could be made operational.

Construction of the canal was initiated in 1979 and completed in 2005. It had been lying in shambles since then, thereby defeating the purpose of the project.

Operationalisation of the 43-km canal also reaffirms the UT Administration's commitment towards strengthening irrigation infrastructure, ensuring water security and enhancing agricultural productivity in Ladakh. In the next 60 hours, when the water reaches the other end of the Canal, it will irrigate 4334 hectares of land in villages en route.

Calling it a “good beginning,” Lieutenant Governor Shri Saxena stated that the release of water in the canal would benefit farmers and villages dependent on irrigation and contribute significantly towards agricultural prosperity in the region.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor lauded the officials of the PHE/I&FC Department for successfully restoring the canal and making it operational within the deadline set by him during his earlier visit to the site on April 25. The Lieutenant Governor had directed the officials to complete the necessary works in time so that water could be released by May 15.

Shri Saxena also directed for constructing additional distributary channels to ensure wider outreach and equitable distribution of water to more villages and agricultural lands. He said agriculture scientists will be invited to work with local farmers in the region and help them experiment with crop varieties that are suited to Ladakh's climate to increase farmers' income through diversified agricultural practices.

The Lieutenant Governor also announced that the defunct Stakna Canal would soon be revived and informed that directions had already been passed to the concerned department to initiate work at the earliest.



