

L-G VK Saxena flags off first export consignment of 5 MT of Ladakh's apricots to UAE

Historic initiative targets export of over 1,000 MT this season through MoU with UAE-based Lulu Retail Exports witness quantum leap from just 1,500 kg in previous two years

Leh, July 15: In a landmark initiative that would transform Ladakh's horticulture sector and expand international market access for local farmers, Lieutenant Governor, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, today flagged off the first export consignment of 5 MT of Ladakh's premium apricots to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The initiative marks the beginning of Ladakh's largest-ever fresh apricot export programme and is expected to significantly enhance farmers' incomes while establishing Ladakh as a global supplier of premium-quality organic apricots.



The export has been facilitated under an MoU signed in April 2026 between the Ladakh Administration and the UAE-based global retail conglomerate Lulu Retail through APEDA, which envisages the export of over 1,000 metric tonnes of fresh apricots during the current harvest season. This is a monumental leap from the mere 1,500 KG of apricots exported during the previous two years, making it one of the most significant milestones in Ladakh's horticultural history.

Apricots, being fragile and perishable, require to be stored and transported in temperatures from zero degrees to 4 degrees. Keeping this in view, the Ladakh Administration, with support from CONCOR, ensured the shipment of Apricots from Ladakh using cold-chain transportation so as to maintain the freshness of the fruits.

The flagship export initiative focuses on 'Raktsey Karpo' and 'Halman', Ladakh's indigenous apricot varieties, internationally recognised for their exceptional sweetness, rich flavour, superior nutritional value and completely organic cultivation. Grown under Ladakh's unique high-altitude climatic conditions, abundant sunshine and pristine environment, the variety is regarded among the finest apricots in the world and has witnessed increasing demand in international markets.

Speaking on the occasion, L-G Shri Saxena said that the export of the first consignment marked the beginning of a new era for Ladakh's horticulture sector and reflected the Administration's commitment to connecting local farmers directly with global markets.

"This export initiative is a historic moment for Ladakh, its horticulture sector and, above all, our hardworking farmers. The flagging off of the first export consignment of Ladakh apricots to the UAE marks the beginning of Ladakh's journey towards becoming a global horticulture export hub. This initiative will not only provide our farmers with direct access to international markets but also ensure fair and remunerative prices for their produce, substantially improving their incomes and living conditions," said L-G Shri Saxena.

Notably, the farmers had traditionally faced considerable challenges in harvesting, sorting, grading, cleaning, packaging and marketing their produce, often resulting in significant post-harvest losses and

reduced returns. But under the new arrangement with Lulu Retail, farmers would simply hand over their orchards to the export agency at the time of harvest, following which the company would undertake the entire value chain – from plucking, sorting to grading, processing, packaging and transporting it to international markets.

L-G Shri Saxena observed that the arrangement would substantially minimise post-harvest losses while ensuring that farmers received fair prices for their produce without having to bear the burden of plucking, grading, packaging and marketing, etc.

Shri Saxena expressed confidence that the initiative would create new marketing opportunities, increase farmers' incomes, reduce post-harvest losses, encourage greater investment in horticulture and eventually establish Ladakh as one of India's leading exporters of premium-quality horticultural produce.