

Historic MoU signed between ITBP Leh Frontier & Cooperatives Dept UT Ladakh for supply of essential food items through Cooperative Societies/FPOs/PACS

L-G VK Saxena calls MoU a crucial step to empower border communities and strengthen local livelihoods in Ladakh

Leh, May 27: In a major step aimed at strengthening local farmers and cooperatives, promoting border-area livelihoods and ensuring supply of fresh produce to security personnel, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was today signed between the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force (ITBP), North West Frontier (NWF) and the Department of Cooperatives, UT Ladakh. The MoU would facilitate the procurement and supply of essential food items and allied products through local Cooperative Societies, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), thereby providing them with assured market linkages for their products.

The MoU was signed by Deputy Inspector General, ITBP NWF, Shri Laxman Yadav, and Secretary, Cooperatives, UT Ladakh, Smt Bhanu Prabha, in the presence of Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena. The agreement has initially been signed for a period of three years.

The MoU is a major step towards overcoming the farmers' challenges to find market for their products, often leading to financial losses. It is aligned with the vision of the Hon'ble Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah, who has directed the Indian Army and Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) to procure local agricultural and handicraft products through cooperatives to generate employment and promote economic self-reliance in border regions. Under the arrangement, ITBP has earmarked an initial amount of ₹21 lakh during the current financial year for procurement of vegetables and allied products through registered cooperative societies/FPOs/PACS in Ladakh.

Describing the initiative as a historic step, Lieutenant Governor Shri Saxena stated that the MoU would economically empower local cooperative institutions and people of Ladakh, including those living in the border areas, while also strengthening local supply chains.

"The ₹21 lakh allocation by ITBP for the procurement of vegetables and allied products is a good beginning. This initiative will encourage farmers in border villages to cultivate more vegetables, improve their livelihoods and strengthen local economic activity. Greenhouses being developed under the Vibrant Village Programme will further help farmers increase vegetable production, which can directly supply fresh produce to ITBP personnel deployed in remote areas," Shri Saxena said.

The Lieutenant Governor further observed that the initiative would also contribute towards reverse migration in border villages by creating livelihood opportunities and strengthening rural economies.

The MoU establishes a structured institutional mechanism for the procurement of locally produced agricultural, horticultural, livestock and dairy products through cooperative institutions functioning under the administrative control of the Additional Registrar, Cooperative Societies, UT Ladakh. The arrangement is expected to create assured market linkages for local producers and strengthen the financial sustainability of cooperative institutions operating in remote areas.

