

L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena meets Union Jal Shakti Minister, Shri CR Patil, in New Delhi *Discusses key water resource and irrigation initiatives for Ladakh*

Leh, May 04: The Lieutenant Governor of Union Territory of Ladakh, Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena, called on the Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Shri CR Patil, in New Delhi and discussed various ongoing water resource, irrigation, and flood management projects in Ladakh.

The Lieutenant Governor apprised the Minister about the Project Him Sarovar, an ambitious initiative of the UT Administration launched recently in Ladakh, which aims at conserving the snow and glacial melt by constructing water bodies in villages. The LG informed that 50 water storage ponds, in the first phase, are being constructed to harness and store snowmelt and glacial runoff. The Lieutenant Governor explained that the project is designed to address seasonal water shortages, particularly for irrigation during the lean period.

Shri Patil appreciated the initiative of the Lieutenant Governor in conceptualising Project Him Sarovar and acknowledged its potential in addressing Ladakh's unique water challenges. The Minister assured that a committee of experts would be constituted to examine the technical aspects of the project and explore ways to further strengthen and scale it, to enhance water security in the Ladakh region.

Shri Saxena also extended an invitation to the Union Jal Shakti Minister to visit Ladakh and witness firsthand the ongoing initiatives and the unique water management challenges of the region. The Minister kindly accepted the invitation and assured the LG to visit Ladakh soon, along with the team of experts and officials.

Lieutenant Governor Shri Saxena also thanked Shri Patil for sanctioning Central Assistance of ₹8.75 crore for various water-related projects in Ladakh, which would help improve irrigation efficiency and optimise water usage in command areas.

The Lieutenant Governor further highlighted a comprehensive five-year plan for conservation, rejuvenation, and harvesting of water resources, including revival of traditional water bodies, upgradation of irrigation canals, creation of percolation tanks, artificial glaciers, automated ice reservoirs, solar lift irrigation systems, and promotion of drip irrigation. Shri Patil assured that all necessary support would be extended by the Ministry to Ladakh.

Shri Saxena briefed the Union Minister on key schemes being implemented with support from the Ministry of Jal Shakti, including the Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) under PMKSY, Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP), and National River Conservation Programme (NRCP).

During the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the unique challenges faced by Ladakh, including its fragile ecology, extreme climatic conditions, glacial dependency, and dispersed population across remote mountainous terrain. He emphasised the need for sustained financial and technical support from the Government of India to ensure water security, agricultural sustainability, and climate resilience in the Union Territory.

