

L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena reviews Dept works, ongoing schemes *Calls for focused efforts to make Ladakh the best Union Territory*

Leh, March 16: Lieutenant Governor Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena today chaired a comprehensive review meeting with the Administrative Secretaries to assess the progress of ongoing projects, schemes and departmental works across Ladakh. The meeting also focused on the key challenges being faced by different departments and strategies to address them effectively.

During the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor urged the Administrative Secretaries to intensify their efforts and work with renewed commitment for the development of Ladakh. He emphasised that Ladakh possesses immense potential in various sectors, which needs to be fully harnessed for the overall progress and prosperity of the region.

Calling the Administrative Secretaries the backbone of the administrative machinery, Shri Saxena stated that their efficiency and commitment would play a crucial role in defining the pace of Ladakh's development. He said that Ladakh has the potential to emerge as the best Union Territory in the country and stressed the need for officials to rise to the challenges and deliver tangible results for the welfare of the people.

The Lieutenant Governor issued several directions to the concerned departments aimed at improving civic infrastructure, environmental protection, tourism development and livelihood opportunities for the people of Ladakh.

Emphasising the need to maintain cleanliness and proper urban planning in Leh town, Shri Saxena directed the authorities to ensure a neat and clean environment with zero tolerance for dirt and littering. He pointed out the issue of poor planning in certain parts of the town and stressed the need for corrective measures. He directed that uniform signages be installed across Leh town and that roadside plantation be carried out to reduce dust and pollution.

The Lieutenant Governor also called for proper road markings, particularly near schools, hospitals and other sensitive areas, along with clearly marked parking and no-parking zones. He instructed that footpaths be cleaned regularly, preferably twice a week, and that dustbins be placed at designated locations to maintain hygiene and order.

Highlighting the need to preserve Ladakh's fragile ecosystem, Shri Saxena emphasised that the UT Administration should adopt a zero-plastic policy to protect the region's pristine environment. He also directed the concerned departments to plan for additional Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), keeping future requirements—up to 15 years ahead—in mind. He further suggested exploring modern technologies such as Decentralised Sewage Treatment Plants (DSTPs) to treat sewage in areas that are difficult to access. He also emphasised that both Leh and Kargil towns should be developed as zero-discharge towns on priority.

Addressing the issue of water scarcity, the Lieutenant Governor stressed the need to identify at least 50 suitable locations for the development of water bodies across Ladakh. These water bodies would help store snowmelt and glacial melt, thereby ensuring a reliable water source for irrigation and helping farmers overcome water shortages.

Shri Saxena laid special emphasis on empowering the people of Ladakh through skill development and training programmes in various sectors. He said that efforts should be made to transform the youth from job seekers into job providers by equipping them with the necessary skills and opportunities.

The Lieutenant Governor also called for exploring Ladakh's wind energy potential to promote clean and renewable energy in the region. In addition, he emphasised strengthening sports infrastructure for the youth by developing facilities for sports such as archery, skiing and hot-air ballooning. He suggested identifying suitable locations away from Leh town for such infrastructure and ensuring proper amenities such as restaurants, cafés, public conveniences and parking spaces at these locations.

Highlighting the importance of tourism as a key driver of Ladakh's economy, Shri Saxena stressed the need to develop Ladakh into the number one tourist destination in the country. He proposed the development of tent cities at scenic locations, similar to those in Kutch, to enhance the tourism experience. He also suggested the procurement of 20-seater luxury buses for tourist transportation and emphasised the need for a fully online booking system for such services.

The Lieutenant Governor further directed the Tourism Department to prepare a comprehensive plan to boost winter tourism so that tourism activities continue throughout the year instead of being limited to the summer months.

Shri Saxena also highlighted the potential for large-scale cultivation of high-value flowers such as tulips, gladiolus and lilies. He suggested identifying large fields for the plantation of these flowers, which could be exported outside the country and create employment opportunities for local residents.

Emphasising the cultural and economic importance of Ladakhi Pashmina, the Lieutenant Governor stated that Pashmina should become a defining identity of Ladakh. He stressed the need for focused efforts to promote authentic Ladakhi Pashmina and ensure that local producers receive fair value for their products in the market.

He also suggested exploring the potential of high-quality salt produced in the Tsokar area as a new avenue for local employment and economic development.

Earlier in the meeting, Chief Secretary Shri Ashish Kundra presented an overview of the ongoing projects and schemes being implemented across Ladakh and briefed the Lieutenant Governor on the key issues and challenges faced by the Administration.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Shri Ashish Kundra; Commissioner/Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor Dr L. Franklin; Administrative Secretaries- Ms Shashanka Ala, Shri Bhupesh Chaudhary, Shri Baseer-ul-Haq, Shri Sanjit Rodrigues, Shri P.T. Rudra Goud, Ms Bhanu Prabha, Shri Qureshi Tariq Mehmood and Shri Moses Kunzang.



