**CSIR Signs an MoU for S&T-led Development of Union Territory of Ladakh**

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An agreement was signed between CSIR and Ladakh UT to accelerate its development through S&T interventions. The MoU was signed by Dr. D. Srinivas Reddy, Director, CSIR-IIIM on behalf of CSIR and Sh. Rigzin Samplel (IAS) Commissioner Secretary *Agriculture and Horticulture from*Ladakh UT. The purpose is to establish knowledge partnership between the Ladakh UT and CSIR, aimed at development in the areas such as bioresource utilization endemic to Ladakh, introduction of cash crops in the region and exploration of natural resources.

Different CSIR Institutes will initiate R&D, extension and societal projects based on their core competencies. In first phase, six Institutes viz. CSIR-IIIM, CSIR-IHBT, CSIR-NBRI, CSIR-NGRI, CSIR-CMERI and CSIR-CLRI will provide extensive knowledge and technological support with CSIR-IIIM, Jammu as nodal institution. The broad areas of interest include industrial agriculture with a focus on commercialization of endemic & other high value medicinal, aromatic and nutraceutical plants/crops, bio prospection of endemic microbial and plants diversity. Geophysical mapping, eco-friendly leather processing and microbiological & biotechnological interventions are some of the other areas of focus.DG-CSIR, Dr Shekhar C Mande emphasized that CSIR is committed to S&T led development of Ladakh and the MoU is a step forward towards this objective.

Earlier, CSIR has made significant contributions to the region by setting up the CSIR-Centre of Excellence for High Altitude Natural Sciences and establishment of experimental and demonstration farms of different medicinal, aromatic and nutraceutical plants/ crops of Ladakh. Demonstrating its commitment to the region, during the Covid-19 pandemic, CSIR is augmenting the COVID-19 testing at Leh and Kargil by providing equipment and trained technical manpower which is being supported by the Sun Pharma through their CSR funding.

## Source

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