

Ladakh Becomes India's First Fully Organic Union Territory

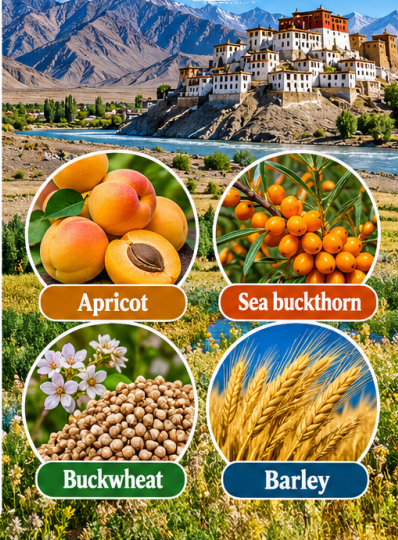
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Why in News?

Ladakh has been designated as India's first fully organic Union Territory, following a phased transition to organic agriculture throughout Leh and Kargil.

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Question area	Fact to remember
 Recent development	Ladakh declared India's first fully organic UT, according to the supplied report
 Districts covered	Leh and Kargil
 Geographic setting	Cold desert; high-altitude Himalayan region
 Policy measure	Ban on chemical and synthetic fertilisers announced in July 2026
 Input support	Organic fertiliser consignments arranged in March 2026
 Crops mentioned	Apricot, sea buckthorn, buckwheat, barley and vegetables
 Potential benefits	Soil health, ecological conservation and market differentiation
 Major challenge	Certification, market linkages and post-harvest infrastructure


Apricot


Sea buckthorn


Buckwheat


Barley

- **Aim** - To advance chemical-free agriculture, preserve the sensitive Himalayan ecosystem, and enhance the livelihoods of farmers.
- The administration has facilitated the transition by imposing restrictions on chemical and synthetic fertilisers, providing organic fertiliser supplies, and implementing certification measures.

Organic Farming

• Organic farming is an agricultural system that emphasises natural processes and biological inputs, while excluding synthetic fertilisers and chemical pesticides as mandated by organic production standards.

• It promotes soil health, ecological balance, biodiversity, and the sustainable use of resources.

• **Key Characteristics**

- Application of organic manures and compost.
- Implementation of crop rotation and additional ecological farming practices.
- Utilisation of biological methods for pest management.
- Conservation of soil and water resources is prioritised.
- Certification and traceability to establish the organic status of produce.

Importance of Organic Farming in Ladakh

- Ladakh is a cold desert region characterised by high altitude, limited water resources, shallow soils, and a brief agricultural growing season.
- Soil conservation helps maintain soil health and reduces dependence on synthetic inputs.
- Water protection reduces risks associated with chemical runoff.
- Ecological sustainability supports farming practices appropriate for fragile mountain ecosystems.
- Certified organic produce may command premium prices, thereby increasing farmers' income.
- Market differentiation helps establish a distinct identity for Ladakh's agricultural products.
- Sustainable livelihoods can create opportunities in processing, packaging, and specialised agricultural markets.

Major Steps Taken by the Administration

- **Ban on Chemical Fertilisers (July 2026)** - Prohibited procurement, sale and use of chemical/synthetic fertilisers across Ladakh.
- **Organic Input Supply (March 2026)** - Distributed organic fertilisers to villages before the sowing season.
- **Phased Organic Transition** - Shifted farming in Leh and Kargil towards organic cultivation with certification and monitoring support.
- **Policy Promotion** - Advanced chemical-free farming to support environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods.

Challenges in Organic Agriculture

- **Certification & Quality Assurance** - Ensuring continuous compliance, traceability, and credible certification.
- **Market & Price Constraints** - High transport costs, limited market access, and uncertain premium prices for farmers.
- **Infrastructure & Input Gaps** - Need for better storage, processing facilities, and reliable organic input supplies.

Reference

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