

## DRDO fostering civil-military ties in Ladakh

By Shimona Kanwar

Ladakh: On his visit to the Leh-based Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR) of DRDO, the defence minister, Rajnath Singh, asked the scientists to develop a high altitude survival model within three years when it completes 60 years of its establishment. He asked the scientists to take up the challenge to recycle the waste plastics into model greenhouse.

Ladakh is celebrating the spirit of Civil-Military Cooperation through the Ladakhi-Kisan-Jawan-Vigyan Mela. The 26th Mela was inaugurated by the defence minister. As a spin-off of the technologies developed, farmers in Ladakh are able to produce a variety of fruits and vegetables resulting in improving their socio-economic condition.

The interdependence created between the locals and the army through the scientific endeavours of DIHAR has contributed to socio-economic upliftment of local farmers. The institute is known for many success stories in translating science to alleviate real-life problems being faced in the remote Ladakh region. DIHAR is now working to develop newer technologies to make fresh food available even in the remotest locations in the Himalayas.



Rajnath Singh visited the experimental farm of DIHAR where technologies for the production of quality organic fruits and vegetables are being demonstrated. He was shown the greenhouse technology, soilless cultivation technology, potato storage technology and growing melons under cold climatic conditions.

Some 40,000 local farmers, military and paramilitary personnel participated in this 2-day event. On the occasion, Dr Satheesh Reddy, chairman DRDO asked scientists of DIHAR to work on the wonder plant, Rhodiola, so that every household and the Jawans benefit from the high-value medicinal plant. He asked DIHAR to reach to 25,000 farmers in Ladakh from the present 10,000 numbers.

Dr OP Chaurasia, director DIHAR briefed Rajnath about the large size vegetables and quality fruits being grown in Ladakh using DIHAR's technology.

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