

Ladakh’s Golden Berry: From Himalayan Heritage to a Global Opportunity

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On 18 and 19 September 2026, Ladakh will turn the spotlight on one of its most remarkable natural treasures—the bright orange-golden Sea Buckthorn, popularly known as “Leh Berry”—with the Sea Buckthorn Conclave-cum-Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet (RBSM). The two-day event is envisaged not merely as a conference or exhibition, but as a comprehensive platform to connect Ladakh’s cultivators, cooperatives, SHGs, FPOs, women entrepreneurs, youth, MS-MEs, researchers, processors and product developers with domestic and international buyers. The proposed programme will bring together around 50 verified buyers and 150 local enterprises and value-chain stakeholders, with structured B2B meetings designed to generate tangible commercial linkages.

There could hardly be a more appropriate setting for such a conversation than Ladakh itself. In a landscape where the climate is unforgiving, temperatures can fluctuate between extremes and agriculture is constrained by altitude and water availability, Sea Buckthorn has demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to survive and flourish. The thorny shrub grows naturally along riverbanks and across the cold desert landscape, turning otherwise difficult terrain into a source of nutrition, ecological protection and economic opportunity. Its ability to survive in such extreme conditions makes Sea Buckthorn a powerful symbol of Ladakh—resilient, resourceful and deeply connected to its environment.

Sea Buckthorn, belonging to the Hippophae genus and, in the Himalayan region, particularly Hippophae rhamnoides, has increasingly attracted attention because its tiny berries contain a remarkable combination of nutrients and bioactive compounds. Scientific literature has documented vitamins, carotenoids, flavonoids, polyphenols, minerals and essential fatty acids, including Omega-3, Omega-6, Omega-9 and the relatively uncommon Omega-7. These compounds have made Sea Buckthorn an important subject of research in nutrition, nutraceuticals, cosmetics and wellness. Scientific reviews have reported antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and other pharmacological potential, while traditional uses have included applications associated with digestion, cardiovascular health, skin conditions and wound care.

This nutritional richness is one of the reasons Sea Buckthorn is often described as a “super berry” or “golden berry.” Its juice, pulp and oil can be transformed into a wide range of value-added products, including health drinks, juices, jams, herbal teas, nutraceutical formulations, cosmetic preparations, creams and oils. The proposed Ladakh Conclave specifically seeks to promote such products under the larger Brand Ladakh identity.

The national recognition of Sea Buckthorn is not new. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing the convocation of Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology in Jammu in May 2018, highlighted Sea Buckthorn from Ladakh as an example of an agricultural resource capable of surviving extreme temperatures. He referred to its medicinal properties, its presence in eighth-century Tibetan literature and the growing use of Sea Buckthorn in herbal tea, jams, protective oils, creams, health drinks and antioxidant products. He also emphasised the importance of value addition and encouraged young agricultural professionals to identify such local resources and transform them into economic opportunities.

The Prime Minister’s subsequent references to Ladakh and Sea Buckthorn have helped bring the berry into the national imagination. More recently, he has also highlighted Sea Buckthorn-based

From Himalayan resilience to global ambition, Sea Buckthorn is emerging as more than Ladakh’s golden berry—it is a symbol of a new economy. Rooted in centuries of traditional knowledge and thriving in one of India’s harshest landscapes, this resilient plant now stands at the crossroads of science, wellness, sustainability and entrepreneurship. The September Conclave seeks to turn raw berries into value-added products, local enterprise into global trade, and indigenous knowledge into modern opportunity. If Ladakh can build the right ecosystem, “Leh Berry” could become a powerful global face of Brand Ladakh.

Ladakh’s Leh Berry for a Healthier, Greener World

Sea Buckthorn Conclave on 18–19 September to connect Ladakh’s indigenous treasure with global markets



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 NUTRITION & WELLNESS Rich in vitamins, antioxidants and Omega fatty acids	 SUSTAINABLE FUTURE Supports soil conservation and thrives in extreme conditions	 LIVELIHOODS & ENTERPRISE Empowering farmers, women, youth and local entrepreneurs	 GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES From Himalayan harvests to international markets
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18–19 SEPTEMBER 2026
LEH, LADAKH



SEA BUCKTHORN CONCLAVE CUM REVERSE BUYER-SELLER MEET
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entrepreneurship emerging from the vibrant villages of Ladakh, particularly the role of women and local entrepreneurs in creating livelihoods through value-added products. This recognition has given greater momentum to the idea that the Himalayan berry should not remain merely a wild fruit harvested and sold in raw form, but should become the foundation of an organised, scientific and market-oriented value chain.

The traditional history of Sea Buckthorn is equally fascinating. Its relationship with Himalayan communities predates modern commercial interest by centuries. Government of India material has noted references to its medicinal properties in eighth-century Tibetan literature, while studies of Himalayan ethnobotanical traditions document its traditional use across the region. One academic review notes that the classical Tibetan medical work Hu Sibu Yidian contains extensive discussion of Sea Buckthorn and describes its traditional relevance to several health-related applications.

The connection with Ayurveda is an area of particular interest. A review published by researchers from the Faculty of Ayurveda, Banaras Hindu University, examined Himalayan Sea Buckthorn under the name “Amleech” and explored its possible relationship with Ayurvedic literature. The authors point towards references to Amleech in Bhavaprakash Nighantu, a later classical Ayurvedic materia medica, while also acknowledging that the exact botanical identity of Amleech has been debated among Ayurvedic scholars.

This distinction is important when discussing the ancient heritage of the berry. There are broad

references in the Vedic and Ayurvedic traditions celebrating the medicinal importance of plants, herbs, fruits and nature. Sea Buckthorn belongs to a much wider and older Himalayan tradition of plant-based healing, with documented links to Tibetan medicine and later Ayurvedic scholarship. Indeed, it reflects the remarkable continuity between Himalayan ecology, indigenous knowledge and modern scientific inquiry.

The health potential of Sea Buckthorn is now attracting renewed scientific attention. Its naturally occurring antioxidants and phytochemicals are being investigated for their possible role in protecting cells from oxidative stress, supporting skin health and contributing to nutritional and metabolic wellness. Its oil is particularly valued for its fatty-acid composition, while the berry’s vitamin and antioxidant profile has encouraged interest in functional foods and nutraceutical products. At the same time, responsible promotion requires a clear distinction between nutritional and research-supported potential and established medical treatment. Sea Buckthorn should be celebrated for its nutritional richness and promising bioactive properties without being presented as a substitute for medical treatment or as a cure for specific diseases.

The significance of Sea Buckthorn also extends beyond health. Ecologically, the plant can contribute to soil stabilisation, erosion control and the restoration of fragile landscapes, while its nitrogen-fixing characteristics make it valuable in the context of sustainable land management. In the cold desert environment of Ladakh, where ecological restoration and

climate-resilient livelihoods are closely linked, the plant therefore represents a rare convergence of environmental and economic value.

For Ladakh’s rural communities, the greatest opportunity lies in moving from raw collection to value addition. A berry sold as raw produce has limited economic value compared with a branded juice, premium nutraceutical, cosmetic oil, herbal formulation or internationally marketed wellness product. The proposed Conclave recognises precisely this gap. It will bring together technical sessions on GI certification, APEDA-related standards, cultivation, research, wellness and pharmaceuticals, branding, packaging and marketing, helping local enterprises move towards larger domestic and export markets.

The proposed Reverse Buyer-Seller Meet is particularly significant because it shifts the emphasis from simply displaying products to creating actual markets. Around 50 verified domestic and international buyers are proposed to interact directly with Ladakhi enterprises, while pre-scheduled one-to-one B2B meetings are intended to facilitate concrete commercial discussions. The success of the event can therefore ultimately be measured not only by attendance, but also by business leads, trade enquiries, Letters of Intent, Memoranda of Understanding and new market linkages.

Another distinctive aspect of the programme is its farm-to-market approach. Participants will witness live harvesting demonstrations, visit an operational processing unit and a model village cluster, interact with local enterprises and experience finished products at the

exhibition. This will create a complete picture of the Sea Buckthorn economy—from the plant growing in the Himalayan landscape to the final product reaching consumers.

The proposed 65-stall exhibition at Leh Main Market will further place Sea Buckthorn within the wider universe of Ladakh’s indigenous products, alongside Pashmina, apricot, handicrafts, handlooms and wood carving. This is important because the future of Brand Ladakh lies not in promoting individual products in isolation, but in creating a distinctive identity around the region’s natural, cultural and artisanal wealth.

Ladakh is already moving in this direction through institutional interventions. The establishment of a Centre of Excellence for Sea Buckthorn has created an important platform for research, training, scientific cultivation, capacity building and value addition. The UT Administration has emphasised the potential of Sea Buckthorn in high-value areas such as juices, oils, nutraceuticals, cosmetics and herbal products.

The momentum has now reached the national level. In August 2026, the Union Agriculture Ministry constituted a high-level committee to examine a proposal for a dedicated national Sea Buckthorn research centre in Nubra Valley, reflecting the growing recognition of Ladakh’s importance in the Sea Buckthorn ecosystem. The proposed institution is envisaged around research, innovation, value addition and commercialisation of the crop.

The 18–19 September Conclave therefore comes at an important moment. It can serve as a bridge between Ladakh’s traditional relationship with Sea Buckthorn and

Sea Buckthorn Conclave on 18–19 September seeks to transform Ladakh’s indigenous “Leh Berry” into a global brand of health, sustainability and Himalayan enterprise

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its emerging future as a modern industry. It can bring together the farmer who harvests the berry, the woman entrepreneur who converts it into a value-added product, the scientist who studies its properties, the processor who develops technology, the designer who creates its brand and the international buyer who takes it to a new market.

Ultimately, the story of Sea Buckthorn is the story of Ladakh itself. It is a story of turning adversity into opportunity. A plant that survives in one of India’s most challenging environments can become a source of nutrition, livelihood, entrepreneurship and ecological resilience. A humble orange berry growing along the banks of the Indus can find its way into global wellness markets. Traditional knowledge can meet modern science; local enterprise can meet international demand; and an indigenous Himalayan resource can become a globally recognised product without losing its Ladakhi identity. The upcoming Conclave is therefore more than a two-day event. It represents an opportunity to create a new narrative for Ladakh—one in which the cold desert is not merely a landscape to be admired, but a source of high-value, sustainable and knowledge-driven enterprise.

The golden berry of Ladakh has already survived the harshest elements of nature. The challenge now is to build the scientific, commercial and institutional ecosystem that will allow it to thrive in the global marketplace.

From Leh Berry to Brand Ladakh, Sea Buckthorn has the potential to become one of the most powerful symbols of Ladakh’s journey from Himalayan heritage to a modern, sustainable and globally connected economy.