

## Prayagraj to get lac products' cluster as Centre allocates ₹2.5 cr

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Lac products' cluster (HT Photo)

**PRAYAGRAJ** In a move aimed at promoting eco-friendly products crafted from the natural resin known as lac, the Central government has allocated ₹2.5 crore for the establishment of a lac products' cluster within the Shringverpur development block of Prayagraj.

Lac, a resin secreted by lac insects that inhabit specific host trees, is cultivated for commercial use without adverse effects on the host trees. This recent initiative by the Union Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) is expected to substantially benefit marginalised farmers and artisans in Prayagraj who are engaged in the production of lac and its associated products, according to district officials who confirmed the development.

The allocated funds have been directed towards the Bioved Research Society, Prayagraj, under the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI). Utilising this financial support, the society, currently comprising 512 members, will establish a common facility centre (CFC) spanning a 3-acre area within the Shringverpur block, located approximately 40 kilometres from the district headquarters of Prayagraj.

The CFC will process raw lac and provide training for individuals interested in learning the techniques of lac cultivation and product manufacturing. The Uttar Pradesh Khadi and Village Industries Board (UPKVIB) in Lucknow will act as the nodal agency in this endeavour.

Director of Bioved Research Institute of Agriculture and Technology (BRIAT)-Prayagraj, BK Dwivedi, explained, "A common facility will be developed in which various machines necessary for processing raw lac into high-quality and pure lac will be installed. These machines will be accessible to the member farmers."

The CFC will be established within a spacious hall covering an area of 7,000 square feet. It will house several machines, including scrapers, crushers, and winnowing equipment for cleaning the lac, with an approximate expenditure of ₹1.15 crore. Another hall will be designated for the drying of processed and graded lac.

Dwivedi elaborated, "We have actively promoted lac cultivation in the state and have arranged for the purchase of the lac. After processing, a portion of the lac will be sold, and the profits will be shared among the society's members, while the remainder will be used to create over 400 different types of products."

The society will also utilise the funds for training farmers and their family members to craft diverse products at home, ensuring they have employment during non-lac producing months and additional income. Dwivedi added, "Lac has diverse applications, spanning from beauty to agriculture and the pharmaceutical industry. A small insect has the potential to transform the fortunes of farmers, requiring nothing more than a branch of a tree," he stated, emphasising his three-decade-long commitment to uplifting the lives of impoverished farmers.