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A Monthly Newsletter by Jammu & Kashmir Policy Institute (JKPI)



UNION BUDGET

COVER STORY

A STEP TOWARDS BOOSTING INFRASTRUCTURE, ECONOMY OF J&K

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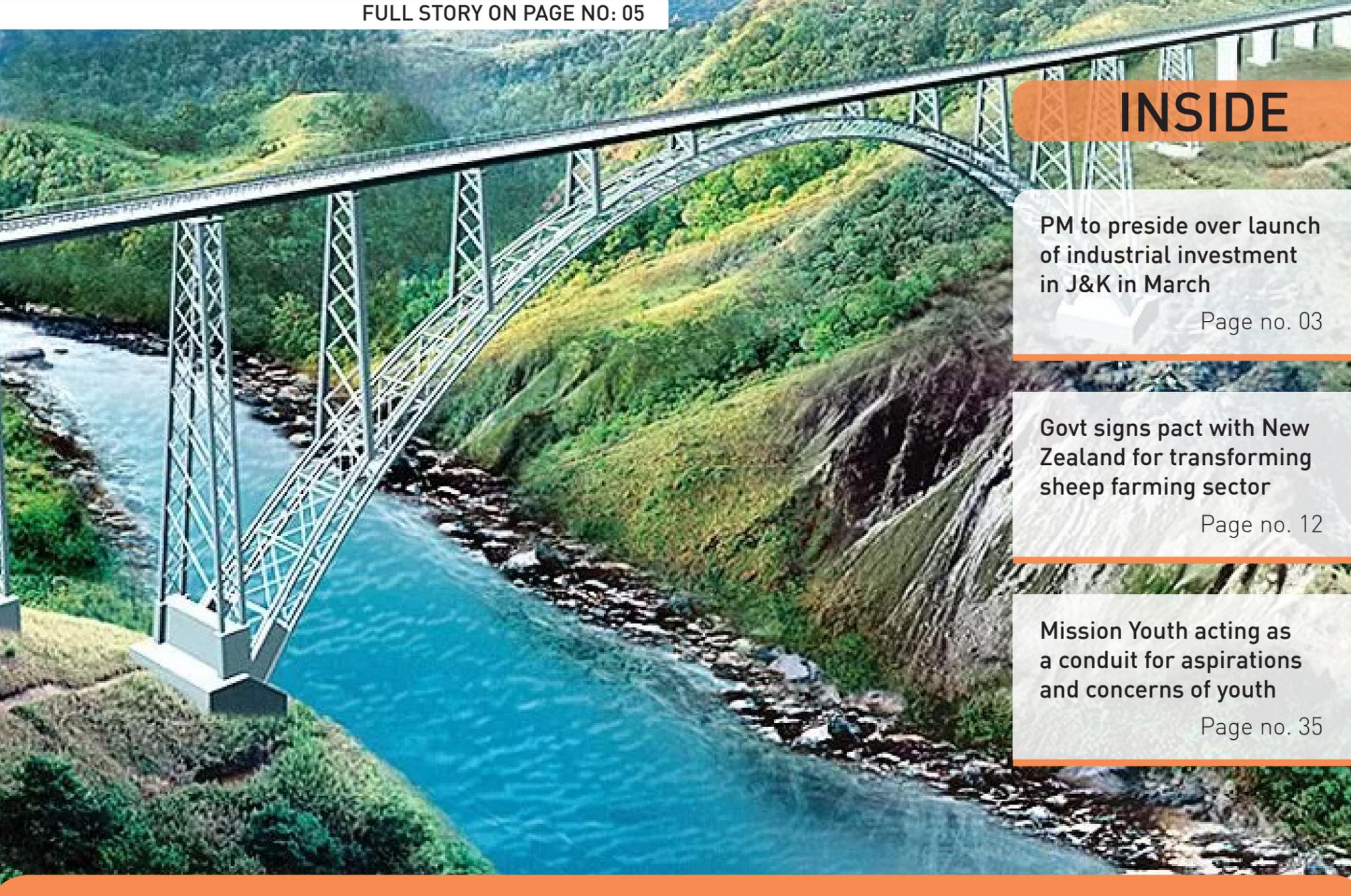
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ALL J&K COLLEGES TO GET NAAC ACCREDITATION: KANSAL

‘STUDENT FEEDBACK, ACADEMIC AUDIT TO BE INTRODUCED IN ALL COLLEGES’

Jammu: The focus of Higher Education must be the quality of learning and teaching. To this end, all colleges would get themselves evaluated and accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) within the shortest possible time. Besides, an academic audit to determine the quality of academic input, need for course or options revision and modernization of syllabus must be introduced in all colleges.

This was instructed by the Principal Secretary Higher Education Department, Rohit Kansal who was chairing a meeting of Principals of colleges of Jammu Division. He said that with the introduction of the New Education Policy NEP 2020, the focus had moved to quality education, flexibility in curriculum and globalization of outlook.

In his message to the principals, the Principal Secretary stressed that while good infrastructure was important for any institution, the true aim of an institute of higher learning was to impart a humanistic, modern and high quality education. He asked the Principals to introduce regular systems of pupil feedback and added that the feedback of the educators would form an important part of their evaluation. The Principal Secretary instructed the principals to adopt technological tools like Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and Learning Management Systems (LMS).

He also said that colleges would be given greater flexibility and autonomy, they too would need to strive hard to achieve quality standards and learning outcomes. He also assured that conditions for utilisation of Local Funds would be made more flexible.

During the course of the meeting, the Principal Secretary informed all about the implementation of New Education Policy-2020 from academic session 2022-23 onwards. He also informed about the new Bachelor in Vocational Skills (B. Voc) degree. Besides, colleges would now be encouraged to exchange knowledge and expertise globally. Innovation and incubation would be fostered in a hub and spoke model and expert assistance and guidance would be provided by the universities and other premier institutes such as the IIT-Jammu, IIM-Jammu and others. Startup competitions and research

would be given special attention under the NEP-2020, he added.

Earlier, the Principal Secretary reviewed the physical and financial expenditures under Capex for the current financial year of the various degree colleges. He also reviewed status of infrastructure and other projects in these colleges. He took a serious view of projects which had been completed and handed over but not yet put to use because of pending issues such as water supply and electricity. He directed the Principals as well as executing agencies to ensure that all future DPRs should be comprehensive include all relevant items so that once handed over, a project should be put to use immediately. He directed rectifications of all pending matters in Bani and Paloura within 2 weeks. The Principal Secretary assured that wherever there was a genuine need, funds would not be a constraint.

The Principal Secretary reviewed the status of the newly established colleges. He noted that the enrollment in most colleges was below expectations and called upon principals of the colleges to ensure that the enrollment ratio was improved. He reviewed the availability of land in colleges where there were bottlenecks and asked the Divisional Commissioner to resolve the same immediately.

He also asked the executing agencies to prepare phase-wise Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for the college buildings so as to make them functional within the shortest possible time period. He called for creating standardised designs for different kind of projects which could be easily replicated by other colleges with minimal intervention as and when required.

Besides the above, languishing projects, staff vacancies, disciplines and streams and many other issues of the colleges were also discussed at length in the meeting.

Those present at the meeting included officials of the Higher Education department including Special Secretary Rakesh Badyal, Director Finance Abdul Majid Butt, Director Planning Ghulam Ganie, Superintending Engineer R&B Kuldeep Nathyal besides Principals of degree colleges and other senior officers.



While good infrastructure was important for any institution, the true aim of an institute of higher learning was to impart a humanistic, modern and high quality education....

PM TO PRESIDE OVER LAUNCH OF INDUSTRIAL INVESTMENT IN J&K IN MARCH

J&K to be self-reliant in power within next one-and-half years

Jammu: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will preside over the groundbreaking ceremony of the launch of industrial investments worth 20,000 to 25,000 crore rupees here next month, Lt Governor Manoj Sinha said on Tuesday.

He sought cooperation of the people to the efforts of his administration to usher a new dawn of peace, prosperity and development under the leadership of Modi in the Union Territory.

“Someday back, I have requested the Prime Minister to

preside over the groundbreaking ceremony of the launch of industrial investment to the tune of Rs 20,000 crore to Rs 25,000 crore. He has asked us to complete the formalities and expressed willingness to be among the people of Jammu and Kashmir to preside over the function by March,” the LG said.

Sinha was speaking at a function organized at Bajalta here to inaugurate 20 power projects completed at a cost of Rs 48 crore to provide better power supply to consumers in five districts of





Jammu, Udhampur, Poonch, Rajouri and Reasi.

He said “within the next one-and-a-half-year, two major projects will be completed to make Jammu and Kashmir self-reliant in the power sector”.

Lauding the Union Home Minister Amit Shah for the industrial investment scheme for Jammu and Kashmir, he said an industrial investment worth Rs 25,000 crore was expected but “the scheme is such that we are confident that there will be an investment of over Rs 70,000 crore in the next couple of years for which we need electricity and land.”

He said the government land available with the Industries department is being allotted to investors who have deposited the fee and submitted the detailed project reports and the process is likely to be completed by February 20 in the run-up to the groundbreaking industrial investment ceremony.

“A new dawn will usher in J&K under the leadership of the Prime Minister... the industrialists have shown their interest and a lot of jobs will be generated. We have made necessary changes in our laws while Rs 1 lakh crore worth road and tunnel projects are in progress to provide modern infrastructure,” he said.

Seeking cooperation of all sections of the society, he said, “You have to support the government efforts to make the atmosphere conducive. I assure you of economic development, progress and social justice.”

He said the government is fulfilling the aspirations of all sections of the society and “I am saying it with confidence that we are moving forward to ensure accountability, transparency and responsive administration.”

Terming electricity a prerequisite for economic development, the LG said J&K has a lot of capacity for power generation which was not fully tapped over the years, while the distribution and transmission system was also in a very bad shape.

“After I took over, we started work in a systematic way to improve distribution and transmission and also made attempts to tap resources for power generation with the whole-hearted support of the central government. We have 3500 MW power available and by 2024, another 2500 MWs will be added,” he said, adding that within the next one-and-a-half years, two major projects will be completed which will make J&K self-reliant in the power sector.

Last year, the said LG 60 MW capacity augmentations were achieved in the region. By March 31 this year, additional 200 MW capacities will be added in our energy basket, he further added.

He said out of 128 sub-projects taken under Prime Minister’s Development Package to improve transmission and distribution system, 134 were completed and the rest of the 54 are being completed by March-end.

Sinha said his administration is making attempts to provide relief to the people of both the divisions of Kashmir and Jammu who used to suffer due to power outages during winter and summer.

“Providing electricity to the consumers is the responsibility of the government but the people have also a responsibility to pay their bills on time. We are installing electricity meters and they need to support the department as there is no option to give free

electricity,” he said.

However, the LG said his administration will have a sympathetic view of the condition of the poor and the farmers.

“Our aim is to make the power department of J&K UT self-sustaining and reduce power theft which is proving to be cancer for this sector,” the LG said.

“I appeal to the people to help the administration in controlling theft, reducing wasteful consumption, cutting down losses and reporting the offenders to the authorities,” he added.

Highlighting the progress attained by the UT in the power sector, the LG observed that the unprecedented achievements in power generation, transmission and distribution sectors in the last one year have completely overhauled J&K’s power infrastructure which remained dilapidated for several decades.

The government is planning to invest Rs 12,000 crore for capacity augmentation, upgrading the transmission and distribution systems to remove all supply constraints, strengthen electrification assets and deliver electricity through underground wires in the capital cities of Jammu & Srinagar, he said.

“We are addressing the shortage of infrastructure with renewed vigor with focus on inclusiveness and bridging divides. Our growth model has multi-dimensional objectives to produce a wide-spread flow of benefits, ensuring access to essential services for all sections and expansion of quality employment,” said the LG.

“For the first time in decades, the government is focusing towards capacity augmentation of Grid Sub-stations in J&K, with augmentation work on 21 Sub-Stations completed last year and another 21 will be completed by March 31, 2022. Work on upgradation of Gladni Grid sub-station which is considered as the Mother Grid station of Jammu division will also be completed by next month.

“Moreover, 134 out of 188 sub-projects of power transmission and distribution have been completed and the remaining 54 are in the final stage of completion. New projects worth Rs 400 crore were started for strengthening the transmission sector,” added the LG.

The LG also congratulated the officials of the Power Development Department, and the people of the region for the new power projects.

Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to LG and Principal Secretary, Power Development Department also talked about the newly inaugurated power projects.

The power distribution projects under Centrally-sponsored schemes inaugurated include new 33/11 KV Sub stations at Bajalta, Rajinder Nagar, Nardani&KishanpurKathar and installation of additional power transformers at Bhalwal& Tanda in Jammu; 33/11 KV Sub-station at Harni and installation of additional power transformers at Surankote&JaranWaliGali, Poonch; Installation of additional power transformers at Sunderbani, Kangri, Dhanwan, Mogla, Kotranka& Nowshera and augmentation of Sub-station Dangri , Rajouri; 33/11 KV Sub stations at Majalta&Kud and augmentation of Sub-station Jakhani, Udhampur and 33/11 KV Sub-station at Dadua, Reasi.



A step towards boosting infrastructure, economy of J&K



Jammu: The Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday presented the Budget for the Financial Year 2022-23 in the Parliament.

The budget seeks to lay the foundation and give a blueprint to steer the economy over the AMRIT KAAL of the next 25 years – from India at 75 to India at 100. Its fundamental tenets include transparency of financial statements and fiscal position, reflecting the government's intent, strengths and challenges to build a robust economy.

This budget has been amicably drafted to benefit all the sections of the Society keeping empathetic approach. This budget will speed up the development works in the Nation and will also boost up the employment opportunities for the youth.

With a total outlay at 39.45 lakh crore, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has been granted Rs. 35,581.44 crore as a part of Central Government's assistance, grants and loans for the financial year of 2022-23, which is very significant in terms of the developmental aspects for the Union Territory. In the previous years a total of 34,704 crore was granted to Jammu and Kashmir. So there has been an increase of Rs 877 crore in budget from last year which is indeed a significant development for entire Jammu and Kashmir.

In other words, the Budget 2022-23 is a step towards boosting infrastructure and economy for J&K.

During the Budget speech, the Finance Minister announced enormous amount as grant to J&K for Power Projects of Chenab, Special Scholarship Scheme, Industrial Development Scheme, Institute of High-Altitude Medicinal Plants at Bharderwah including a package under Special Category of States.

As per the budget, a sum of Rs 260 crore has been allocated for Industrial Development and Rs. 225 crores for scholarships. Also, an amount of Rs 273 crore has been allotted for rehabilitation of Dal Lake and Nagin Lake. Correspondingly, a total of Rs 279 crore have been allocated as grants for contribution to Union Territory's Disaster Response Fund whereas 4 crore is assigned for setting up Institute of High-Altitude Medicinal Plants at Bharderwah.

Moreover, as per the Budget document, 800 MW Ratle power project and 624 MW Kiru power project have been granted 476 crore and 130 crores respectively. Both these projects are being constructed on river Chenab in District Kishtwar. Additionally, for capital expenditure, Rs 500 crore have also been allocated for Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

In a significant development under the budget, the border villages through 'VIBRANT VILLAGE PROGRAMME' with less population, limited connectivity and poor infrastructure will get development gains. This will include construction of village infrastructure, housing, tourist centres, road connectivity, provisioning of decentralized renewable energy, direct to home access for Doordarshan and educational channels as well as support for livelihood generation. Additional funding for these activities will be earmarked besides existing schemes will also be covered and their outcome will be defined and monitored on constant basis.

Commenting on the budget, Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha welcomed the announcement made by the Central Government for starting PARVAT MALA scheme. This scheme will create a modern system of transportation on the mountains and hilly terrains. As a preferred and ecologically sustainable alternative to conventional roads in difficult hilly areas of J&K, National Ropeways Development Programme will be taken up in PPP mode. The objective of the programme is to improve connectivity and convenience for commuters, besides promoting tourism. This will also cover congested urban areas, where conventional mass transit system is not feasible.

The Parvat Mala approach is driven by seven engines like Roads, Railways, Airports, Ports, Mass Transport, Waterways and Logistics Infrastructure. These engines are complemented by the complementary roles of Energy Transmission, IT Communication, Bulk Water and Sewerage and Social Infrastructure.

Finally, the approach is powered by Clean Energy and Sabka Prayas- the efforts of Central Government, UT Government and Private Sector together- leading to huge job and entrepreneurial opportunities for all, especially the youth. The proposals in this budget, while continuing the declared policy of stable economy, will intend to bring more reforms that will take ahead the vision of prosperous INDIA.

What does the Union Budget 2022-23 stand for?



V. ANANTHA NAGESWARAN

Four Cs – continuity, correctness, conservatism and crowding-in – are the hallmarks of the budget for 2022-23 presented by the finance minister on the 1st of February.

The budget has continued with the practice started two years ago of bringing all below-the-line items above the line. Extra-budgetary resources in which the borrowing is guaranteed and serviced by the Union Government is restricted to a single transitional item of Rupees 750 crores in the current year's revised estimates (RE). Transparency and cleaner accounting continue to be accorded the highest priority in budget-making as was the case with the previous two budgets.

In the last two years, marked by the global pandemic, the government has provided resources for the vulnerable sections of the society through Emergency Credit Line Schemes, through Emergency Food support (PM Gharib Kalyan Yojana) involving allocation of additional foodgrain over and above eligibility under Public Distribution extended multiple times, enhanced allocations to rural employment guarantee programme and PM-Kisan.

In this year's budget, it has extended the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme to contact-based sectors that are yet to return to their pre-pandemic levels. The revamping of the Credit Guarantee Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSME) and infusing additional capital into it will unlock additional Rupees 2.0 lakh crores of credit to MSME.

The government has used the pandemic crisis as an opportunity to usher in many important structural changes in the economy. Examples include the Production Linked Incentive Schemes for fourteen sectors, the ending of the uncertainty associated with retrospective taxation, privatisation, faceless assessment and reduction in corporate and personal income taxes wherein taxpayers could opt for lower tax rates with fewer or no exemptions or to file under the old method. In addition, important process-oriented measures such as the launch of the Gati Shakti dashboard, reforms to government procurement, changes to Factoring laws and the Account Aggregator framework have been launched.

The budget for 2022-23 builds on this approach of combining structural reforms and process improvements. The many initiatives under Gati Shakti, the inter-linking of many portals (Udyam, e-Shram, NCS and ASEEM) to help MSME with credit facilities, skilling and augmentation, the enabling of post-offices with the core -banking solution, the facilitation of updated returns to correct errors in the original returns for up to two years and creating a pathway for world-class foreign universities and

institutions in selected fields to be set up in GIFT city are but few of the examples.

The assumption of 11.2% as the growth rate of GDP at current prices might strike many as being too conservative especially given that the Economic Survey for 2021-22 projects a figure of between 8 and 8.5% as the growth rate for GDP at constant prices. If anything, the chances of this projection being exceeded are higher than the chances of undershooting it, given that real GDP contracted q/q in 1Q2021-22. That sets up a positive base effect for 2022-23. However, depending on the impact of the omicron variant on economic activity could be weaker in the last quarter of the current fiscal year. If multiple external shocks impact the Indian economy in 2022-23 (oil price shock, Fed's monetary policy normalisation impacting global financing conditions, etc.), then 11.2% might not appear as conservative but prudent.

Capital expenditure by the government will rise 36% over the revised budget estimate (and 35.4% over BE 2021-22), after one excludes the cash infusion of nearly Rupees 52000 crores into AIR INDIA. It includes Rupees 1.0 lakh crores of 50-year interest-free loans to state governments to undertake capital infusion. It includes incremental (over last year's 65000 crores of Rupees) budget support of Rs. 69000 crores (provided as equity) to the National Highways Authority of India. All of this information is in the public domain.

If State governments were allowed these Rupees 1.0 lakh crore as an additional borrowing limit, they will bear an interest rate that is higher than the rate at which the Union Government borrow. Further, the money can be used for revenue expenditure. This interest-free loan, dedicated as it is to capital expenditure, incentivises it. The fact that states' capex up to November 2021 was 67% higher than in the same eight months of the previous financial year supports this 50-year interest-free loan purely for capital expenditure purposes.

NHAI's capital investments in recent years have been considerably financed by borrowings and this has increased its interest burden. By providing enhanced budgetary support, the government is strengthening NHAI to remain a financially viable entity while ensuring continued investment in national highways.

Once confidence and cheer crowd out the pandemic-induced concern that is currently clouding the minds of the citizens, then the various measures announced and the capital investments envisaged in the budget will succeed in crowding in private investments.

The author is the Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India. These are his personal views.

Far-flung areas of rural interiors to become fully connected with financial sector: LG



Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said efforts are being made to enable far-flung areas of rural interiors to become fully connected with the financial sector.

Reviewing the progress towards financial inclusion by banks in J&K with MK Jain, Deputy Governor RBI, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary and other officials, the LG shared the vision of the UT government for extending the banking and financial services to the doorsteps of the people of J&K.

“To broaden the social base of development, we are enhancing people’s access to financial products, promotion of ‘one district one product’, institutional credit to women, youth, SMEs, handicrafts, horticulture and various other priority sectors for effective contribution to growth processes of the UT,” the LG said.

According to an official press release, he said “J&K has become one of the preferred destinations for industrial investment, tourism, film industry and real estate sector.”

He said the government is committed to ensure adequate and timely availability of credit to industrial and different productive sectors of the economy to finance

growth.

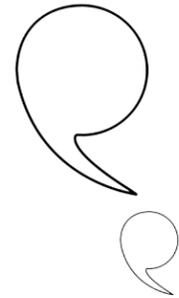
“In the last two years, various reforms have been executed to provide opportunities to scheduled commercial banks to expand operations in J&K,” the LG observed.

“We will also work together to make our credit lending system more sensitive to the needs of women and youth entrepreneurs, farmers and artisans,” the LG said.

“There is a need for additional banking outlets in rural areas to bring excluded households into the fold of institutional credit and financial services in a structured and sustainable manner,” he said while adding that the enabling ecosystem will also bridge the gap between government schemes and people living in geographically difficult terrain.

The LG asked the concerned officers to explore all possibilities for extending financial handholding to the eligible beneficiaries through various government schemes and interventions.

MK Jain, Deputy Governor Reserve Bank of India highlighted the importance of increasing the presence of banks for greater financial inclusion. He informed that the implementation of govern-



THERE IS A NEED FOR ADDITIONAL BANKING OUTLETS IN RURAL AREAS TO BRING EXCLUDED HOUSEHOLDS INTO THE FOLD OF INSTITUTIONAL CREDIT AND FINANCIAL SERVICES IN A STRUCTURED AND SUSTAINABLE MANNER,” HE SAID WHILE ADDING THAT THE ENABLING ECOSYSTEM WILL ALSO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND PEOPLE LIVING IN GEOGRAPHICALLY DIFFICULT TERRAIN.

ment-sponsored schemes is monitored through the UT level Bankers’ Committee at periodic intervals.

Discussions were also held regarding creation of banking infrastructure, streamlining the working of district cooperatives and other banking cooperative societies, effective utilization of funds under NABARD schemes, concerns of the industries and commerce sector, availability of banking services, micro finance institutions and NBFCs, and other important issues.

Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance department; Baldev Prakash, Managing Director & CEO, J&K Bank; Kamal P. Patnaik, Regional Director, RBI; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the LG; Ranjan Prakash Thakur, Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce department (through virtual mode) and other senior officers attended the meeting at Raj Bhawan, the press release said.

LG inaugurates 22 power transmission and distribution projects costing Rs 216 cr

Pledges to strengthen power infrastructure in every district of J&K



Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday reiterated resolve for practical, pragmatic and viable solutions to strengthen power infrastructure in every district of J&K UT.

Inaugurating 22 power transmission and distribution projects built at a cost of Rs 216 crore here, the LG, according to an official press release said that the J&K's power infrastructure, which remained dilapidated for the last several decades, is being transformed at a fast pace.

"Today's development represents a giant stride in capacity augmentation and improvement in power supply to consumers of Jammu, Samba, Hiranagar, Kathua, Udhampur and adjoining areas. The new power projects will meet the power supply demand of the citizens as well as the industrial sector," he added.

Terming the occasion as "historic" for the people of Samba, the LG said that the Samba district has also received a dedicated grid station after a long wait of 15 years.

"We are firm in our resolve for practical, pragmatic and viable solutions to strengthen power infrastructure in every district of J&K UT," the LG said.

To address the current power-deficit and to meet the needs of an expanding economy, the government is upgrading transmission and distribution infrastructure that will also enable us to generate productive employment opportunities for youth, he added.

The LG expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister and Union Power Minister for their continuous support in strengthening the power sector in J&K. The upcoming Rs 12,922 cr power sector project for the UT will increase the total availability of electricity in the system, especially for the households, industries and agriculture sector, the press release said.

The LG said that Jammu & Kashmir, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, "is moving towards fulfilling the dream of a better life for every citizen.

"We are working on an unprecedented scale in building new infrastructure and improving the facilities available to the citizens," he added.

"Government will not rest till J&K truly becomes one of the country's best developed regions, which the entire nation can be

proud of," said the LG.

He also congratulated the officials of the Power Development Department, the people of Samba and the adjoining areas on the commissioning of new power projects.

"PDD is making efforts to reduce T&D losses and bring them within reasonable limits. The department has achieved praiseworthy results. However, due to power theft, honest consumers who pay their electricity bills regularly are bearing the brunt of the cost of theft by other unscrupulous elements. We need to sensitize people to pay their bills on time and help the government to make the power sector financially viable," the LG observed.

He also made a special mention of Jagmohan Sharma, Chairman JPDCL for highlighting the core issues of the power sector in the UT.

Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member Parliament, while speaking on the occasion, highlighted how the new projects will benefit the people of Samba, Kathua, and adjoining areas.

"Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, J&K has entered into the era of equitable development and the change is clearly visible on ground with the rapid implementation of several development projects," he added.

The JKPTCL projects worth Rs 153.42 cr inaugurated includes 160MVA, 220/66 kV Samba Grid Station including 220KV D/C Jatwal- Samba Transmission Line; 160MVA, 220/66 kV Kathua-II (Ghatti) Grid Station including 220KV D/C LILO of Thein-Hiranagar Transmission Line; LILO-I of 220 KV D/C Hiranagar-Bishnah Transmission Line from 400/220 KV Grid Substation Jatwal and 1x50MVA, 132/33KV Grid Station Battal-Manwal including 132KV D/C Hiranagar-Battal-Manwal Transmission Line, under PMDP and PMRP.

Moreover, 18 power distribution projects (11 in Samba and 7 in Kathua) costing Rs 63 cr under various centrally sponsored schemes including 66/11 KV 33/11 KV Substations and installation of additional power transformers were also e-inaugurated on the occasion.

The projects will improve the power supply and reduce the transmission losses, it was informed.

LG lays foundation stone for Drug De-addiction Centre at Jammu

Aim is to wean away youngsters from addiction and mainstream them

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday laid the foundation stone for the Drug De-addiction Centre at Jammu, which he said will act as an integrated centre where addicts will be treated, counseled, enabled to learn new productive skills, and rehabilitated with utmost care and affection.

“We are witnessing a worrisome trend of substance abuse. Our aim is to wean away youngsters from addiction and bring them into the mainstream of the society,” observed the LG.

According to an official press release, he said youth of J&K have immense potential and are achieving great heights in various fields. “A conspiracy is being hatched from across the border to push our youth into darkness through drugs,” the LG said.

“J&K government has intensified its efforts to fight narco-terrorism unleashed by neighbouring country,” said the LG.

“We have identified some high-risk districts which are being provided special attention to enhance community participation, public cooperation, and youth-led awareness campaigns to counter the menace of drug abuse,” the LG added.

He lauded the security forces, J&K Police, Anti-Narcotics Task Force, government departments and volunteers for working with commitment and determination to eliminate drug addiction from society.

“I urge the stakeholders, youth, educational institutions and NGOs to work as a team. We should be able to transform the drug de-addiction efforts of various stakeholders into a Jan-Andolan,” the

LG said.

He suggested the involvement of youth clubs and women in campaigns to supplement the efforts against drug abuse.

Dilbag Singh, DGP J&K, while speaking on the occasion, said that the Drug De-addiction centre will be completed at an estimated cost of Rs 4.27 cr under Jammu Smart City through J&K Police, which will play a greater role in rehabilitation of drug addicts in the region.

Every year, more than 6000 addicts are being treated in police Drug De-addiction centres, he added.

It was informed that the establishment of this centre has received funding under Smart City and CSR from the Airport Authority of India.

Chander Mohan Gupta, Mayor, JMC termed drug abuse as one of the biggest challenges for the youth, and a serious threat to humanity. He called upon the people to initiate a change from their homes to address this serious issue.

Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member Parliament appreciated the endeavours of the LG-led UT government to fight drug menace in J&K. He also underlined the need to spread mass awareness regarding drug de-addiction.

Mukesh Singh, ADGP Jammu; Dr Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Purnima Sharma, Deputy Mayor JMC; Devender Singh Rana, former legislator; Anshul Garg, DC Jammu representatives of ULB and PRIs, senior officials of police were present on the occasion.

LG lays foundation of Tawi riverfront development project in Jammu

Jammu: Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday laid the foundation of the Tawi riverfront development project here and said it would generate employment opportunities for local communities.

Observing that civilizations have prospered on the banks of rivers, the LG said “sustenance and rejuvenation of Tawi riverfront will create an economic engine for the holy city and generate employment opportunities for local communities.”

According to an official press release, he said planned urbanisation while respecting and restoring the delicate balance of nature can influence inclusive development. “Tawi riverfront will ensure proper infrastructure planning, unique business opportunities and enhance the quality of life of the citizens,” he said.

The LG said social and cultural infrastructure, state-of-the-art amenities along the waterfront, and projects to improve the water quality will create a world-class model of urban excellence in Jammu.

“Our aim is to create a vibrant riverfront that will become one of the most popular bucket list destinations for people,” he said.

In the first phase, embankments, interceptor drains, sewerage treatment plants, cycling track, jogging track, walkways, green spaces and other wayside amenities would be developed.

The complete project is prepared on the lines of the Sabarmati riverfront in Gujarat.

The infrastructure would also include river plazas, promenades, parks, gardens, sports and entertainment venues, commercial and residential spaces that will transform Tawi as the center of economic engine of Jammu, an official spokesman said.

The LG also said 109 projects which were pending for years have been completed in Jammu division at a cost of Rs 455 crore, including 14 new bridges which have made connectivity easier.

“Infrastructure projects like Metro, Delhi-Katra-Amritsar Ex-

pressway, four-lane green field Jammu Ring Road, flyovers, industrial estates, strengthening of power sector and many others would bring prosperity to all,” he said.

The LG termed urban development a requisite for prosperity and growth of any region and called for active public participation in the development process.

“People’s participation should decide how we want to drive the engine of economic growth, how we want to develop infrastructure, how we want to improve the basic facilities and improve the standard of living of the common people,” he added.

The LG appreciated the efforts of Jammu Smart City Limited and its CEO, Avni Lavasa, and Principal Secretary, HUDD, Dheeraj Gupta, made towards the development of Tawi Riverfront.

The LG said that Tawi Riverfront development will also enhance the proper system of water supply, better sanitation facilities, and prevent pollution and waste in the river.

Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary, H&UDD, while speaking on the occasion briefed the gathering on the salient features of the Tawi Riverfront development project.

Chander Mohan Gupta, Mayor, JMC said the ambitious project of Tawi Riverfront would make the Jammu city more beautiful and would be a major tourist attraction.

Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member Parliament said that the Tawi Riverfront will take the tourism sector of Jammu to new heights.

Avni Lavasa, Commissioner JMC and CEO JSCL presented the vote of thanks.

Dilbag Singh, DGP; Mukesh Singh, ADGP Jammu; Dr Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Purnima Sharma, Deputy Mayor JMC; Anshul Garg, DC Jammu; public representatives; members of the Jammu Chamber of Commerce, besides other senior officers and citizens were present on the occasion.

J&K's handmade carpets get QR Code based mechanism for certification & labeling



Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday launched QR Code based mechanism, which is first of its kind in the country, for certification and labeling of handmade carpets of J&K.

With the QR-based application, customers can check and verify authenticity and other requisite details of carpets produced in Jammu & Kashmir UT, an official press release said.

Speaking on the occasion, the LG observed that J&K Handicrafts are repository of India's creative traditions that is serving as a cultural expression for centuries. This creative tradition is strikingly visible in handmade carpets with intricate designs and subtle shades.

"With the help of modern technology, we will be able to standardize uniqueness of handmade carpets & boost exports of J&K's carpet industry in the international market," he added.

On the occasion, the LG also felicitated UT's awardees of Handicrafts & Handloom.

"I truly admire the painstaking work of all the craftsmen and carpet weavers. Government is providing training and financial support to strengthen the priceless artistic and cultural heritage of J&K UT," he said.

The LG also said that J&K has a unique identity in the global market for handloom and handicraft products. He noted that the Indian Institute of Carpet Technology has taken several important steps for GI certification, testing, labeling and training to promote Kashmiri carpets.

"Government of Jammu and Kashmir has introduced Export Incentive Scheme. Under this scheme, incentive of 10 percent of the total volume of GI certified handicrafts and handloom products exported to any country, with maximum reimbursement upto Rs Five crores, shall be provided to eligible exporters

registered with Department of Handicrafts and Handloom," he added.

The Department of Handicrafts & Handloom and Indian Institute of Carpet Technology (IICT), Srinagar shall launch a massive awareness and promotional campaign within and outside the UT to popularize GI of hand-knotted carpets so that its demand gains popularity across the globe, the LG said.

It was informed that a project has also been completed in association with NIFT Srinagar on innovative and economical packaging of handicraft products.

The LG also informed that presently carpets are being exported from Jammu and Kashmir to at least 25 countries. In 2020-21, carpets worth Rs 115 crore were exported to Germany, Rs 34 crore worth to USA, Rs 36 crore to UAE and Rs 22 crore to Netherlands.

Earlier, Ranjan Prakash Thakur, Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce department briefed the LG about the key features of the QR Code based GI application.

Mahmood Ahmad Shah, Director, Handicrafts & Handlooms Kashmir gave a powerpoint presentation on the background and present scenario of the handmade carpet industry of Jammu & Kashmir, and latest initiatives made by the UT administration to promote it.

Anoo Malhotra, Director, Industries and Commerce, Jammu; Zubair Ahmad, Director, IICT Srinagar; Dr. Javid Ahmad Wani, Director, NIFT Srinagar; Dr. Vikas Gupta, Director, Handicrafts & Handloom, Jammu; Sheikh Ashiq, president, KCCI; Firdous Ahmad Bhat, chairman and Maharaj Krishan Bhat, vice-chairman, Kashmir Carpet Cluster Development Organization, besides other officers and awardees were present on the occasion.

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Macadamization, PWD Bridge Manuals 2022 to bring standardization and uniformity in project execution: Govt

Jammu: The Administrative Council (AC), which met here under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, took note of the Public Works Department's J&K Macdamization (Execution and Quality Control and DLP Enforcement) Manual and J&K PWD Bridge Manual 2022, an official handout informed Friday.

The handout said that the department has compiled these manuals by incorporating the best practices in the field in accordance with the latest standards and endeavours to bring about uniformity in practices, promote transparency and ensure engineering perfection. To improve the quality of riding surface of J&K's road network, the J&K Macdamization Manual categorizes the road length in the Union territory as Inter-District Roads, Major Roads, District Roads, Rural Roads, Local roads, etc.

The Macdamization Manual further establishes a Quality Control (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA) protocol to be strictly adhered to during macadamization works. In case of any breach in quality, the contractor will also be made equally responsible for technical divergences due to negligence or execution of poor-quality works. All Divisions will be mandated to review the performance of every macadamization work post-winter/monsoon season, so as to assess pavement distress and map the same for subsequent prerogatives under the Defect Liability Period (DLP).

The Administrative Council also noted the J&K PWD Bridge Manual 2022 which standardizes the engineering practices in bridge construction to bring uniformity, transparency, and accountability in project execution. Accordingly, the Department will be required to uniformly undertake Project Preparation, Feasibility Study, Preliminary Project Preparation, Detailed Project Preparation, Formwork and Staging, Quality Systems for Road Bridges, Project Scheduling and Monitoring of Works, Bridge Inspection and Maintenance, Bridge Numbering in light of IRC 7:2017, Structural Health Monitoring of Bridges; for proper maintenance the catalogued bridges in the Union territory.

It was also informed that PWD is also following the Standard Operating Procedure for optimal maintenance of roads during snow clearance activities. The SoP lays down the short-term measures to be taken by the PWD in snow clearance operations which include snow clearance with conventional attachments to be provided to all R&B Divisions, Town Area Committees, and Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

For long-term intervention, the SoP requires the Disaster Management Department to procure technically approved machinery as is being used in several developed countries for scientific clearance of snow causing minimal damage to the road surface.

The snow clearance protocol recommends commencement of clearance operations only after 100mm of snowfall by 50mm vehicle blades to avoid damage to the road surface, besides sprinkling of salt over frosted surfaces to improve surface friction.

However, if the road damage after a snowfall is attributed to poor macadamization work rather than snow clearance operation, the contract DLP Clause will be enforced, and contracting agencies will be made responsible to rectify reported damages due to their negligence.

The SoP further allows for the empanelment of private players with appropriate machines for snow clearance operations through incentives like a long-term contract for 10-15 years. The rates for the snow clearance items will be based on an analysis of rates as per MoRTH/ BRO. Besides, the contracting agencies/ unemployed youth will also be incentivized under credit-linked schemes of the Industries & Commerce Department, Labour and Employment Department, and Tourism Department for procurement of suitable machinery under the technical supervision of the Mechanical Engineering Department.

The Administrative Council directed the Department to regularly update the manuals and guidelines and ensure optimal quality and cost efficiency consistent with the mandatory provisions of GFR and e-tendering.

Govt signs pact with New Zealand for transforming sheep farming sector

Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday signed a pact with New Zealand for the transformation of the sheep farming sector in the Union territory, officials said.

The agreement between the two sides was signed through the virtual mode in the presence of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. The agreement was signed by Navin Choudhary, Principal Secretary of Animal & Sheep Husbandry Department and Mischa Mannix-Opie, Executive Director, New Zealand G2G as a mutual commitment between J&K and New Zealand for complementing each other's capability in sheep sector, an official press release informed.

Speaking on the occasion, the LG observed that the new partnership between J&K and New Zealand will boost production and productivity in livestock sector of the UT.

“Overarching objective of the MoC is to improve farmers’ remuneration, transfer of technology in research & development as well as marketing & value addition of sheep products of J&K,” the LG said.

“New Zealand is an important partner of India’s expanding relationship globally and we attach special values to our ties not only because of deep bonding and cultural affinities but also from a mature understanding of our strategic convergences, global interests and economic potential,” observed the LG.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern believe in shared commitment to promote ideals of democracy, peace and prosperity for the people. Despite turbulent events of global pandemic since the last two years, there has been almost seamless continuity in India-New Zealand relationship, said the LG.

This year marks 70th anniversary of commencement of bilateral relations between our two countries. It gives us opportunity to strengthen our partnership and our resolve to construct a strong edifice of a long term, mutual reinforcing economic relationship, he added.

“Now, expanding our relationship further, New Zealand G2G, the well known public sector entity actively partnering with other Indian states to leverage expertise and solutions for sustainable development has entered into a cooperation agreement with J&K to encourage collaboration in the field of sheep husbandry, capacity building, technology transfer and training.

“The new partnership is aimed at doubling produce in the next three years with substantial increment in quality of livestock products, wool production and introducing processing facilities and value addition to boost income and benefits to Jammu Kashmir,” the LG added.

“We are creating an enabling environment for the integrated

growth of livestock sector which is providing livelihood support to around 1.2 million families and contributing 5 percent to the Union Territory’s GDP.”

The LG also said that Government of Jammu & Kashmir has unleashed unprecedented reforms in various spheres in the last two and half years.

“An innovative & self sustaining Integrated Sheep Development Program was launched during 2020-21 with an aim to supplement livestock production & build entrepreneurship in the sector.”

The LG reaffirmed that the leadership of the two countries believes in the huge potential for our economic and commercial cooperation.

“We are committed to create conditions, which would facilitate the rapid growth of this cooperation. I am confident this cooperation agreement between New Zealand G2G and Jammu Kashmir Union Territory is just the beginning of widening and deepening of our relationship in the future,” the LG added.

David Pine, New Zealand’s High Commissioner expressed hope that the cooperation of agreement shall further strengthen the relationship between J&K and New Zealand and help in achieving the desired results on ground.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Sectary, J&K said that the MoC is a timely step to add further momentum to our excellent bilateral ties and to facilitate greater institutional linkages between J&K, India and New Zealand. This will improve our practices in the sheep farming sector and increase the income of everyone associated with it.

Mischa Mannix-Opie, Executive Director, New Zealand G2G said that the latest scientific interventions shall be extended to J&K which shall entail marketing of livestock products like wool for adding value to farmers produce.

Navin Kumar Choudhary, Principal Secretary to Government, Animal & Sheep Husbandry Department, while speaking on the broad contours of the MoC, said that the new initiative shall have a direct impact on farmer’s remuneration and make necessary improvement in sheep farming sector in J&K.

“It will enhance mutton production, value addition of livestock products, capacity building, technology transfer, greater education and trainings in J&K for the benefit, welfare and prosperity of both current and future generations,” he added.

New Zealand Trade Commissioner for South Asia, Ralph Hays; Director Oceania, Ruby Jaspreet; Commercial Manager G2G, Erin Mehar, besides HoDs of concerned departments and other senior officers attended the MoC signing ceremony in person and through virtual mode, the press release informed.





All withdrawn posts to be re-advertised, fast tracked for fair and transparent recruitment

JAMMU: All the vacancies recalled by a recent decision of the Administrative Council shall be referred again to recruitment agencies for fast track recruitment as per the new domicile, reservation and recruitment rules providing equal opportunity to all. A free, fair and merit based selection shall be quickly ensured, an official spokesman said.

He said that it is also clarified that withdrawal of posts referred to PSC /SSB before 31.10.2019 has only been done for posts where selections have not been made and results have not been declared.

“It is important to note that a number of posts referred to PSC /SSB by various departments, have remained stuck up for long time, in some cases 2004 onwards. Some of these posts could not have been advertised, as they were against recruitment rules. Therefore, selection against these posts could not have been made. Withdrawing these posts was essential to ensure that they can be filled up as per rules in vogue, opening opportunities for youth of J&K,” said the spokesman.

He said that appointments to posts referred are required to be made in a timely manner, normally within a year or so as delay of several years vitiates the recruitment process.

“Recruitment Rules of various departments have been changed/updated. The qualifications and experience required for a number of posts has changed. After 31.10.2019, some posts were also transferred to the Union Territory of Ladakh. Selection against posts transferred to the Union Territory of Ladakh can no longer be made. Hence, withdrawal of these posts was essential,” said the spokesman.

The spokesman clarified that job opportunities for the youth have not been curtailed in any way due to withdrawal of these posts.

“The job opportunities for the youths have not been curtailed due to withdrawal of these posts, as these posts will be re-advertised soon. Already all new vacancies are being referred to recruitment agencies for continuing the process of fast track recruitment, providing equal opportunity to all. These posts shall also be put to recruitment drive along with the already identified vacancies across the departments. Free, fair, merit based selections shall be ensured,” the spokesman said.

It is worth mentioning that recruitment against another about 3000 Class IV posts which had been advertised recently is being completed soon, he said.

JK UT scores 75% under NeSDA; 2nd among UTs'



Srinagar: Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta convened a meeting on e-HRM on J&K, Digital portal for real time monitoring of District Good Governance and J&K e- Services delivery assessment.

Among others, the meeting was attended by V Srinivas, Secretary DARPG; DG IMPARD Saurabh Bhagat; Joint Secretaries of DARPG, NBS Rajput, Jaya Dubey; Secretary IT J&K, Prerna Puri and senior officers of Government of J&K besides Knowledge partners from CGG Hyderabad and KPMG India.

On the occasion, the Chief Secretary along with Secretary DARPG approved the outlines of the Dashboard which shall provide a monthly view to all DDCs, Administrative Secretaries, and Chief

Secretary's office for improvement and outcomes in every month.

The meeting was informed that after the successful launch of District Good Governance Index (DGGI) to measure the annual change, the Government of J&K in collaboration with Department of Administrative Reform and Public Grievances (DARPG) has developed a Dashboard with 50 indicators and 140 data sets to help measure the monthly change between various districts thus to provide a more accurate measure of district governance.

During the meeting, the NIC, Government of India presented the dashboard on the indicators finalized by JKIMPARD and it was decided that the DGGI Dashboard will be ready by 15 February and DG IMPARD was made Nodal Officer for the initiative.

While reviewing the progress under NeSDA, it was informed that JK UT has an overall score of 75% which is second among UTs and in most of the 7 sectors namely Finance, Labour & Employment, Education, Social Welfare, local government, Environment and Tourism, the J&K has performed exceedingly well.

Dr Mehta informed that in addition to 56 services already mapped, 130 new services under Ease of Doing Business (EODB)/BRAP shall also be added making the total number 186.

The Chief Secretary directed the Secretaries of Tourism, Labour and Employment and Housing and Urban Development Department to resubmit data and provide IT Secretary accurate information so that the UT obtains number 01 ranking not only among UTs but also among states.

A project report of 53 crore was submitted by SIU NIC for funding under e-HRMS for human resource data entry for approximately 4.5 lakh employees of the state.

e-HRMS project shall help the government in keeping all employees data like APRs, leave, promotion, increment and salary records in e-form.

LG reviews IT Deptt's Strategic & Policy initiatives towards Digital Mission

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha reviewed the Information Technology Department and discussed its Strategic & Policy initiatives towards Digital Mission.

During the meeting, Sanjay Gaden, Principal Consultant (Head-SeMT)-NISG, briefed the Lt Governor via a PowerPoint presentation on digital services blueprint, which is based on unified interface, major umbrella reforms, and enhanced digital infrastructure.

It was informed that the IT Department is working on revamping Digital Services with better digital infrastructure, trained human capital, and aligning high-value ICT projects with sustainable outcomes.

The Lt Governor said that the UT Government aims to provide the best and transparent online services within specified timelines.

He issued directions to keep a provision of penalty if the timelines to deliver the online services are violated for ensuring hassle-free and timely services to common man.

The Lt Governor further directed the IT Department to utilize the best available technologies to fulfill the goal of Digital J&K.

It was also mentioned in the meeting that e-offices have been established by all the major departments and field offices across the UT.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor; Purna Puri, Secretary Information Technology Department; Amit Sharma, CEO, Jammu and Kashmir e-Governance Agency; representatives from Centre for Development of Advanced Computing, besides other concerned officers of IT Department attended the meeting.

Govt launches Digital JK, Digital Districts and Digital Panchayats



Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir administration has set a timeline of May this year to launch various e-governance initiatives on a single platform towards promoting ease of living in the Union Territory.

Chief Secretary Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Thursday chaired a meeting to launch Digital JK, Digital Districts and Digital Panchayats campaign to bring in various e-governance initiatives on a single platform towards promoting ease of living in Jammu and Kashmir.

Administrative Secretaries of departments of Health & Medical Education, School Education, Revenue, Rural Development, Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs and Information Technology were present in the meeting.

The Chief Secretary asked the IT consultants to work towards evolving an integrated 'Digital J&K, Digital Districts and Digital Panchayats' model in Mission mode by creating unified platform to provide all government services by May 2022.

Mehta maintained that more than 200 government services offered by various departments will be brought online on a single platform with a provision for Single Sign-On (SSO) through first registration which will go a long way in assisting the public to avail multiple government services by using their unique digital IDs.

Mehta entrusted upon the concerned Departments to undertake major procedure simplifications across departments by doing away with unnecessary compliance burden and use of technological interventions to further streamline the service delivery.

All the services will be delivered through State Data Centre (SDC) and all the existing services will also be shifted on the SDC to ensure coherence and seamless integration, he added.

The chief secretary also directed that the services may be delivered in three languages i.e., English, Hindi and Urdu with Voice-to-Text conversion and document extraction facilities.

Services will be end-to-end digitized and documents will be issued and delivered to the applicant online via 'Digi Locker' without any human interference. Finally, efforts should be made to ensure that all the services will be available on 'UMANG' platform, he said.

All these efforts will improve the service delivery system and enhance system efficiencies besides reducing unnecessary footfall in offices. The IT department was asked to start this programme with a campaign titled 'Your Mobile, Our Office' and promote e-services literacy among the beneficiaries.



J&K GOVT & OYO GROUP LAUNCH RURAL HOME STAY UNDER PROJECT 'CROWN OF INCREDIBLE INDIA'

Jammu: Jammu & Kashmir government and world's leading travel tech platform, OYO Group launched rural home stay under project "Crown of Incredible India" in a special event presided by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan.

The LG announced Rs 50,000 special financial assistance to youth willing to establish a home stay unit.

According to an official press release, speaking on the occasion, the LG said that J&K UT has emerged as a leader in the tourism sector over the last two-and-half years.

"With a market giant like OYO coming onboard, we are making in-roads to encourage micro-entrepreneurs in the villages and revitalizing local art & crafts and redevelopment of rural areas," he said.

"Undoubtedly, nature has blessed J&K with great scenic beauty, and rural home stays will offer a piece of eternal culture, cuisine, traditions, and warm and friendly hospitality of J&K UT to domestic and international travelers," the LG observed.

"This new initiative will empower local communities, youth and women, fulfilling the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat. Through vocal for local products, individuals and enterprises will help in poverty alleviation and sustainable development," he said.

The venture will help in building a tourist infrastructure of world standards in rural J&K. By December this year, around 200 home stays will be available on OYO platform, he added.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, the tourism sector has made unprecedented progress and recorded highest tourist influx in the country, besides generating great employment avenues for the locals, observed the LG.

He also said that the government is creating requisite facilities for the domestic and international tourists to experience the rich rural culture and traditions. "Better road connectivity, water and electricity supply, mobile and internet connectivity are being ensured in the villages included under Tourist Village Network," he added.

"We are making efforts in a systematic manner to connect the youth and self-help groups on a large scale in the tourist village network and give them an opportunity to be a part of the transformation of rural J&K," said the LG.

The UT government under Mission Youth will support 500

youth for establishing home stay, he added.

The LG asked the DDCs, PRI representatives and other stakeholders to play their important role in tapping the huge tourism potential of rural J&K.

The new initiative will also promote sustainable and eco-tourism, rural products and creating employment opportunities in rural areas, he further added.

Mohammad Yousuf Gorski, Chairman, DDC Anantnag thanked the UT government for the endeavour to support the rural homeowners and augment their livelihood.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, while speaking on the occasion, said the rural home stay under project "Crown of Incredible India" will create new entrepreneurs, provide gainful employment to the rural youth and strengthen the rural economy.

Ritesh Agarwal, Founder & Group CEO, OYO, said that the OYO group is proud to extend its partnership with the Jammu & Kashmir government to generate economic and employment opportunities in rural areas.

"We are committed to strengthening tourism for the benefit of local communities and aim to work together with these micro-entrepreneurs to promote sustainable and responsible travel and home-stays that contribute to resilient local economies and support jobs," he added.

OYO Hotels has tied up with 20 home stays in Pahalgam and 10 home stays are present on their platform as on date. The project also aimed to improve tourism in underpenetrated areas in Udhampur, Doda, Pahalgam and Kokernag, it was informed, the press release informed.

Ranjan Prakash Thakur, Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department and Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, CEO Mission Youth outlined the key features of the rural home stay initiative.

Rohit Kapoor, CEO OYO India and South East Asia presented the Vote of Thanks.

Theme presentation on Home stays and a video message from Pahalgam Home stay owners were also showcased.

Dr. Piyush Singla, Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag; Siddhartha Dasgupta, President Corporate Affairs, OYO; Guruprasad Sankaranarayanan, Chief Strategy Officer – India & South East Asia, OYO and other concerned officers were present on the occasion.

UNEMPLOYMENT CRISIS IN J&K

Jammu and Kashmir is facing an unprecedented unemployment crisis, apart from violence and political uncertainty.

Managing the resurgence of educated youth is a huge challenge for policy makers unless fresh and imaginative thinking is applied to deal with the crisis.

With each passing year, the number of educated unemployed young people is increasing and meaningful and respectful means of engagement for them are as rare as ever. The COVID crisis has badly exacerbated this situation.

In its report Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), a Mumbai based think-tank, the unemployment rate in Jammu and Kashmir witnessed a slight reduction in the past two months from 22.2 per cent to 15 per cent at the end of December 2021. According to CMIE, the percentage as of October 2021 was 22.2% relative to the national average of 7.74%.

The government should propose measures to solve the problem of unemployment by developing policies adapted to the evolving situation. While it is true that the government is the largest employer in the region, that is not the solution to the problem.

In coming times, unemployment alone will constitute a great threat not only to the physical and psychological health of society, but also to the security of the state.

The UN says, "employment and income generation are fundamental elements of the post-conflict solution. For communities and individuals, job creation and regular income can provide the means for survival and recovery. In short, generating employment is crucial to building peace."

As Jammu & Kashmir is directly run by the Center... it is necessary to see how the political executive fulfills its promises made with the young people here.

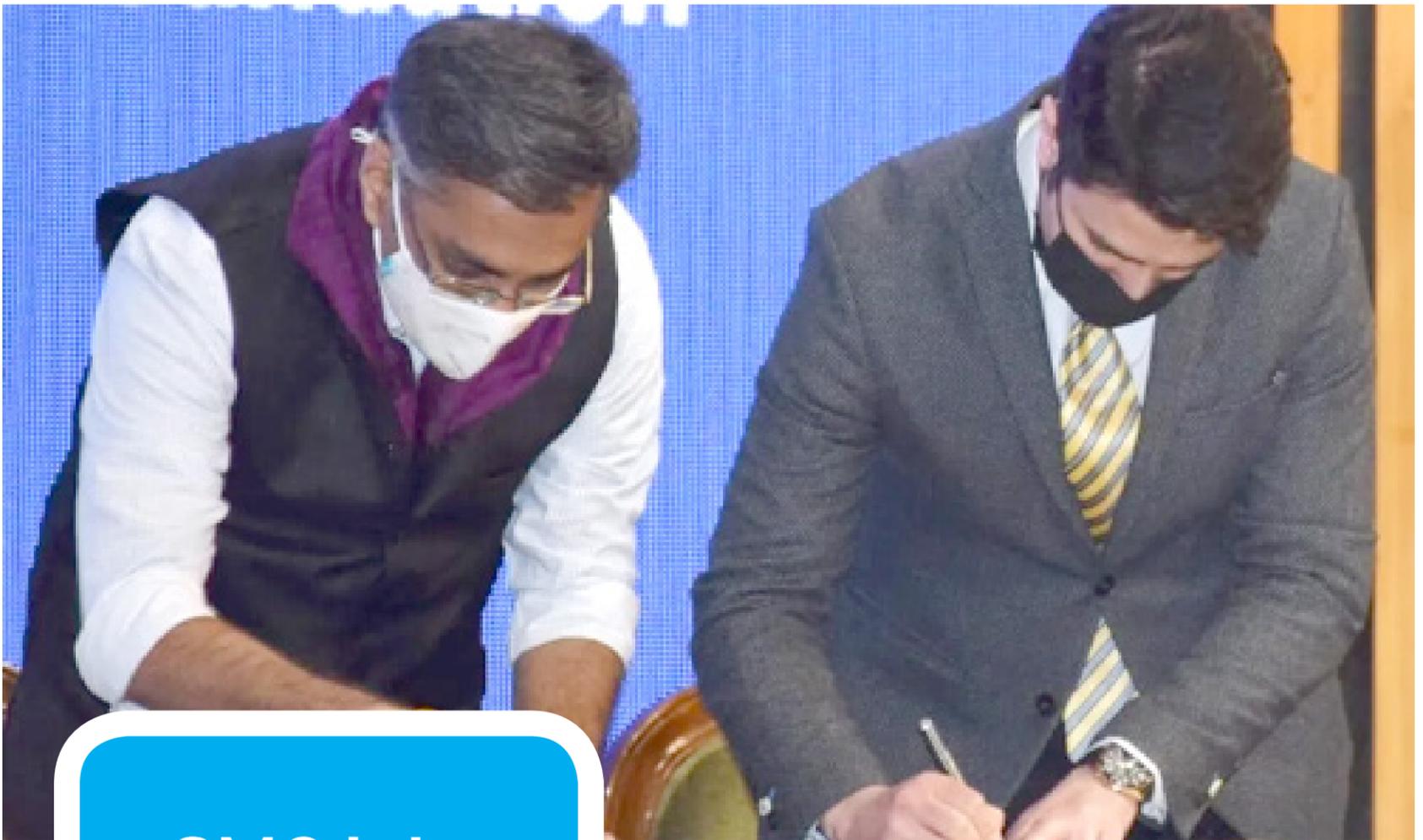
The government must not shirk its responsibility to help young people find jobs with respect and dignity. Self-employment regimes are one option. But here, the government will have to ensure that unnecessary red tape and barriers created by the bureaucracy and the banks are eliminated.

The need is to reinvigorate self-employment programs and to think innovatively and make them more favorable individuals.

Such programs should be made so attractive that instead of relying on public employment, the unemployed should voluntarily prefer self-employment. And for that, the government must force the financial institutions here to behave and share a certain social responsibility.

After all, combating unemployment is and will be a responsibility shared by all. But all this will ultimately depend on the resolve of the government – if it seriously endeavors to deliver on the job front, there is no reason why it can't do so.

Now that the CMIE data has laid bare the ugly reality of unemployment in J&K, it is for the government to pull up its socks and deliver on its own promises on the employment front – if not for the popular good but still for the security and stability of this place.



SMC inks MoUs with Praja Foundation & Azim Premji Foundation

Srinagar: Srinagar Municipal Corporation Tuesday signed Memoranda of Understanding with Praja Foundation and Azim Premji Foundation for making urban governance more effective and transforming primary school education in Srinagar city.

In the presence of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, the MoUs were signed by Athar Aamir Khan, Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Commissioner; Bijoy Shankar Das, Leader – North Eastern States and Jammu & Kashmir at Azim Premji University and Milind Mhaske, Director Praja Foundation, an official press release informed.

Speaking on the occasion, the LG said that the MoU between SMC and Praja Foundation aims to empower citizen participation through enhanced e-governance system in Srinagar and capacity building programmes for municipal councilors and administration.

“Relentless efforts for good urban governance and sustainability in cities to be further strengthened with cooperation of Praja Foundation,” observed the LG.

“Transparent and participatory processes in urban governance are important for tapping the vast potential, vitality of cities and higher economic growth. Reforms in urban governance will improve urban infrastructure, urban services to poor and help the cities to build on their inherent capacities,” the LG added.

He underlined the need to create smart solutions, smart platforms to form a link between the public and policies to make the process of rapid change a reflection of the needs and aspirations of the people and develop a new self-understanding.

“Reforms introduced by the government in urban governance aim to provide much-needed human and financial resources for

TRANSPARENT AND PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES IN URBAN GOVERNANCE ARE IMPORTANT FOR TAPPING THE VAST POTENTIAL, VITALITY OF CITIES AND HIGHER ECONOMIC GROWTH. REFORMS IN URBAN GOVERNANCE WILL IMPROVE URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE, URBAN SERVICES TO POOR AND HELP THE CITIES TO BUILD ON THEIR INHERENT CAPACITIES..,

improving basic services like drinking water, health care, sanitation, housing and better quality of living in the cities,” the LG said.

“There is going to be a massive urban transformation in the cities in the coming future, which will improve the standard of living and will also attract new capital investment,” he added.

“Today, we have to overcome few challenges while we are developing our cities into smart ones. We must formulate policies and programs to eliminate social inequality; extend benefits of development to all sections of the society; eliminate the role of multiple agencies; strengthen Municipal Corporations and accelerate local economic development to improve the quality of life in the cities,” observed the LG.

He asked the officials of the Municipal Corporation and other stakeholders to understand these challenges and work accordingly.

“Under the leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, we have taken a huge leap towards strengthening urban governance by establishing transparent, accountable, participative and corruption-free system. It is our collective responsibility to provide basic minimum facilities, means of livelihood and better services to the people,” the LG added.

Quoting Swami Vivekananda, the LG said that the only thing that needs to be done to serve the people is to educate them so that they can develop their personality.

“The partnership with Azim Premji University will strive towards improving the education scenario in all SMC’s Schools and continuous professional development of teachers and administrative leadership,” added the Lt Governor.

Junaid Azim Mattu, Mayor, SMC said that the collaboration of SMC with Azim Premji Foundation and Praja Foundation will transform urban governance and primary education in Srinagar.

Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Charu Sinha, IG CRPF; Mohammad Aijaz, DC Srinagar; Abdul Jabbar, DIG, SKR; Tassaduq Hussain Mir, Director School Education, Kashmir; ULB representatives, members of Praja Foundation and Azim Premji Foundation, besides other senior officers attended the MoU signing ceremony at SKICC.

13 J&K kids make it to national level exhibition of INSPIRE awards



Srinagar: Around 13 students of various government schools from Jammu and Kashmir have made it to the National level exhibition of Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE) awards for the academic year 2020-21.

The students, who are in the age group of 10-15 years, competed in a statewide e-exhibition conducted by the National Innovation Foundation-India (NIF) in collaboration with the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) earlier in January.

The scheme, INSPIRE, is one of the flagship programs of the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India, that aims to motivate students in the age group of 10-15 years studying in classes 6 to 10.

The objective of the scheme, the Inspire website says, is to target one million original ideas/innovations rooted in science and societal applications to foster a culture of creativity and innovative thinking among school children.

Under this scheme, schools both government and private can nominate

5 best original ideas/innovations of students through the official INSPIRE website.

Giving details of the exhibition, Sahreen Mushtaq, who is the J&K Coordinator of INSPIRE-NIF, said the exhibition which is 9th in the series because of the Covid restrictions, could not be conducted in the offline mode.

“For Kashmir division, the State Level Exhibition and Project Competition (SLEPC) was conducted on 17 January and for Jammu, 19 January,” Sahreen said. “A total of 116 students including 60 from Kashmir and 56 from Jammu exhibited their original ideas/innovations which were scrutinized by a jury of four experts.”

Professor Electronics and Communication, University of Kashmir, Dr Shabir Ahmad Parra, Professor Mohammad Ashraf Shah, HOD Physics, National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar acted as Judges for Kashmir, while as Poonam Sharma, HOD District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) Jammu and Arsh Kour, Lecturer at DIET Jammu, acted as judges for Jammu.

Sahreen also sat as a jury member at both exhibitions.

“Earlier, a total of 1123 students, out of 10344, had qualified for the district level exhibition out of which 116 made it to the state level,” Sahreen informed. “Danish Javid, Basit Ali Moti, Mehvish Khaliq, Khushboo Riyaz, Khushboo Jabar, Mubashir Ramzan, Mohammed Adeel Allam are from Kashmir division while as Lata Devi, Mahsoom Fatima, Mahima Kaur Sodhi, Ismat Kousar, Shabina Akhtar and Vansh Kumar belonged to Jammu division.”

The selected students, she said, would further be mentored by a team of experts from NIT and other institutions to have their ideas/innovations improved upon.

Extremely delighted over their selection to the national level exhibition, Principal Secretary, School Education, B K Singh, congratulated the students.

“It’s important that our children learn to embrace the spirit of experimentation and have fun with science,” Singh said.

Director SCERT, Prof Veena Pandita, said the important milestone achieved by the students after successfully competing at the district and UT level, is a proud moment for all of us.

CS launches integrated tourism portal of JK

Srinagar: Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta launched the integrated web portal of the Tourism department which shall provide a one stop solution for tourists and visitors.

The web portal will provide all the information related to tourism in Jammu and Kashmir including its allied agencies like Tourism Development Authorities, J & K Cable Car Corporation, J & K Tourism Development Corporation, Golf Courses etc and shall be available to the users under a single window. The web portal will have provision for online bookings and operator registration for tourists.

While launching the web portal, the Chief Secretary said that providing best services to the people should be the focus of the department. He said the primary aim of launching the portal has been to facilitate tourists in their enquiries about destinations, services and products. In this regard he directed the concerned to keep checking and reporting how many users are actually using the portal and doing booking and registration of hotels through the portal.

Through the multi facility portal, the Department intends to make people familiar with Jammu and Kashmir including the 75 lesser known destinations and also provide them with the knowledge of the shrines, heritage sites, wildlife, adventure sports and cuisine of the UT.

To make it more user friendly, the portal has an inbuilt grievance redressal mechanism, where the tourist can lodge their complaint.

The events which the department intends to organise shall also be available on the portal. The assets of the department have also been geo mapped in the portal.

Director Tourism Kashmir, Dr G N Itoo; Managing Director, JK Cable Car Corporation, Muhammad Akbar Wani and other officers of Tourism Department attended the launch function whileas Secretary, IT, Prerna Puri; Secretary Tourism, Sarmad Hafeez; Director, Tourism, Jammu, Vivekanad Rai; MD, JKTDCC, Syed Fakhruddin; CEO, JKeGA and other officers attended the meeting from Jammu.

MoTA approves major projects for J&K

Jammu: The Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt of India convened the Project Approval Committee (PAC) meeting for Jammu & Kashmir to consider and approval various Research and Development projects submitted by the Tribal Research Institute, J&K.

Union Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA), Anil Kumar Jha chaired the meeting which was attended by Jt Secretary MoTA, Dr Navaljeet Kapoor, Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department J&K and Director, Tribal Research Institute Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Director TAD, Mushir Ahmed Mirza, OSD Dr Abdul Khabir, Asstt Director Sushil Kumar Gupta, Under Secretary Mukhtar Ahmed and senior officers from Govt of India and NITI Ayog, an official press release informed Tuesday.

It said Secretary, MoTA, Anil Kumar Jha complemented the Jammu and Kashmir government for establishing a very vibrant Tribal Research Institute and record number of initiatives related to research, publications, cultural heritage, fellowships, awards, workshops and capacity building programmes organised in recent months. He assured every help to Tribal Research Institute J&K under various schemes.

The PAC approved several proposals submitted by J&K government including establishment of Centre for Research in Tribal Health (CRTH) in coordination with Government Medical College, Srinagar, establishment of Centre for Research and Advance Planning for Tribals (CRAPT) in Jammu and up-gradation of Tribal Research Institute including accommodation of staff, scholars and faculty. Project related to healthcare screening of transhumant population, migratory tribal population and capacity building of tribal youth was also approved, the press release informed.

Other projects and initiatives approved by the PAC include integrated tribal village development planning, impact assessment programme for SCA to TSS and other centrally-sponsored schemes, mapping of highland pastures, development of portal for migratory population, training and capacity building programmes, tribal festivals, awards for outstanding performers, museum management, exposure visits for tribal students, seminars, workshops and seminars among other projects. Infrastructure for TRI headquarters was also approved in the meeting.

Earlier, Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department, made a de-



tailed presentation about the projects proposed to be initiated by the J&K Tribal Research Institute. He briefed about the inter-sectoral coordination with Universities, Medical Colleges as well as research institutions for establishment of various centres as well as outreach programmes for coverage of tribal population under various schemes and initiatives. The programmes related to establishment of Museum, libraries, computer labs, scholarship and fellowships, research and development projects were also discussed. He emphasised on focus being laid on Research and documentation for professional planning aimed at overall tribal welfare.

Capacity building of PRIs for implementation of Forest Rights Act, Skill Development of educated youth linked to entrepreneurship, training of Self-Help Groups to be financially supported under the Van Dhan Scheme, mission for wider coverage of scholarship scheme, Skilling and entrepreneurship of tribal women, competitive programmes for youth and several other projects proposed by the TRI J&K were also approved by the PAC.

The meeting also discussed about role to be played by TRI for hand-holding and capacity building of all development and welfare departments for formulation of effective Tribal Sub-Plan as mandated by the Government of India.

Deputy Advisor, NITI Ayog, M Muniraju briefed about support mechanism to be extended by the NITI Ayog for overall tribal welfare in J&K with focus on education. Plan for capacity building of teachers in Smart Schools being developed in tribal areas was also discussed.

'Janbhagidari Portal' moved to different server for speed

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir administration is now hosting the 'Janbhagidari Empowerment' portal on a different server with higher bandwidth for swift access to it by the public.

The intervention came following complaints about slow speed and bandwidth issues, which caused disenchantment amongst users despite its great value as an information platform, the administration spokesperson said.

He said Chief Secretary Dr. A K Mehta recently reviewed the issue of slow speed and outages on the portal with the IT department and directed it to upgrade the server to improve the browsing speed.

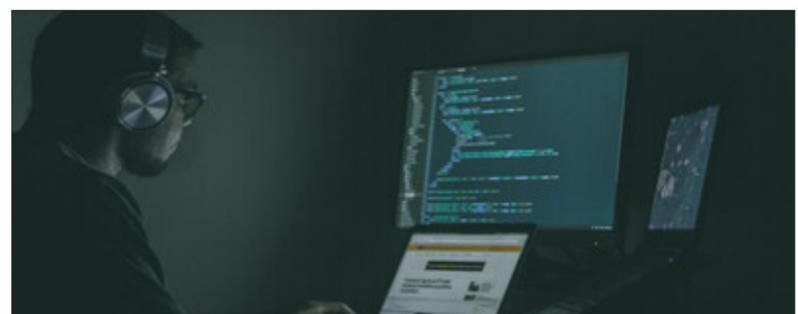
After the move, the portal has begun to open quickly enough, improving the whole experience of visiting the portal, the spokesperson said.

He said around 70,000 people have accessed the portal till now.

With increase in the bandwidth, the portal is expected to receive more hits in near future, he said.

The portal is a one-stop interactive and user-friendly website that gives detailed insights to users into the nature, status, and the number of developmental works underway in their areas.

The works could be searched by entering the name of the dis-



trict, block or municipality, and village.

The portal also provides the option to users to send feedback about any work being done by the government in their areas.

It has links to schemes like MGNREGA, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Swachh Bharat Mission Urban, Swachh Bharat Mission Rural, and PMGSY, the spokesperson said.

The objective of the portal is to encourage the citizens to access the website to gain firsthand knowledge of the works being executed in their areas and give their feedback about the quality and pace of work in their respective areas so as to ensure equitable and inclusive development.

J&K becomes first UT to be integrated with national single window system

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir has become the first Union Territory to be integrated with the national single window system as Lt Governor Manoj Sinha launched the J&K single-window portal, integrating it with the national single-window system.

While 130 industrial services have been made online on a single-window system, over 160 more services would be integrated this year, the LG said.

According to an official press release, the LG said his administration is linking Jammu and Kashmir into a web of partnerships with the domestic and foreign companies and ensuring global best practices in “our regulatory institutions and system”.

The LG also reiterated the government’s commitment to strengthen the industrial ecosystem in a manner that the benefits percolate to all sections of the society in Jammu & Kashmir.

The LG said J&K is the first UT to be integrated with the National Single Window System. “Now global investors can apply for all their business approvals in J&K through the National Single Window system,” he added.

“We are ensuring ‘Ease of Doing Business’ & ‘Ease of Living’ through minimum regulatory compliance burden. We are linking Jammu Kashmir into a web of partnership with the domestic and foreign companies and ensuring global best practices in our regulatory institutions and systems,” Sinha said.

“We are also giving focused attention to the growth of dynamic sectors including real estate, horticulture and tourism to create large employment opportunities,” he said.

Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister and Home Minister for bringing industrial reforms in J&K, the LG said that in the last one year, since the launch of the new Industrial development scheme, our policies have evolved to make Jammu & Kashmir more competitive and lucrative for industries and service enterprises.

“These reforms have helped us receive investment proposals worth Rs 70,000 crore in different sectors within a year,” he added.

“After years of poor performance in industrialization, Jammu & Kashmir is at a new stage in its development trajectory. Focused attention is being given to the growth of dynamic sectors including real estate, horticulture and tourism so as to create increased employment opportunities,” said the LG.

“We are strengthening J&K’s power and road infrastructure, improving connectivity and law and order situation. We have launched a massive program costing about Rs one lakh crore to upgrade our infrastructure,” the LG said.

“There is an air of optimism and I am fully convinced of positive outcomes,” he added.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary said that the administration is making constant efforts to be among top performers in

‘Ease of Doing Business’ and ‘Ease of Living’, and bring fundamental change in the socio-economic ecosystem.

He emphasized on monthly progress review meetings with all stakeholder departments involved, ensuring successful implementation of G2B & G2C services on ground. Further, he added that all services shall be covered under the ambit of J&K Public Service Guarantee Act, 2011.

Ranjan Prakash Thakur, Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department briefed about the key features of the J&K Single Window system.

J&K Single Window System has emerged as a “One Stop Solution” for investors/applicants ensuring hassle free services, he added.

It was informed that the Integrated Single Window System will facilitate new investments locally and globally either through National Single Window System or through J&K Single Window System (www.singlewindow.jk.gov.in) with user-friendly interfaces and timely approvals.

Department of Industries & Commerce being the nodal department shall coordinate with all departments of Government of J&K for successful compliance of Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP) 2022 and Regulatory Compliance Burden (RCB) 2022.

J&K Government envisages 100 percent on ground implementation of ‘Ease of Doing Business’ & ‘Ease of Living’ initiatives through UT/Division/District level feedback improvement campaigns. It also focuses on creating a healthy competition among departments and districts to have the best MIS dashboard (approval timelines) with zero pendency and timely redressal of grievances.

It was informed that 130+ services are hosted online through Single Window Portal and more than 2600 burdensome regulatory compliances have been identified and uploaded on RCB portal, GoI before the deadline (31st January 2022).

Short films on “New Jammu & Kashmir vision & development”, “J&K Single Window (JK-SW) System” & “Integrated National Single Window System (NSWS)” were showcased on the occasion.

Sumita Dawra, Additional Secretary, DPIIT, GoI Additional Secretary DPIIT, GoI said that the integration of J&K Single Window system with the National Single Window system will enable the investors to know the preliminary clearances (Know Your Approvals) on a single click and can apply services either through NSWS and JKSWs.

Purna Puri, Secretary to Government, IT Department; Anoo Malhotra, Director, I&C, Jammu; Smita Sethi, Managing Director, SIDCO; Shrawan Pathak, Team Leader EoDB; Kanav Kapahi, Senior Consultant; SICOP IT Team members and other concerned officials were present on the occasion, in person and through virtual mode.



LG lays foundation stone for development of Jhelum riverfront

Srinagar: Asserting that a systematic effort to improve the cities in J&K UT has been long overdue, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Monday laid the foundation stone for Jhelum Riverfront development to be developed on the lines of Sabarmati riverfront.

Costing Rs 75 crores, the riverfront project is being implemented by Jal Shakti Department under the Srinagar Smart City project. The phase-1 is envisaged with modern public utilities and state-of-the-art green space, an official handout informed.

The LG also laid foundation stone for redevelopment of Poloview Road as pedestrian walkway at a cost of Rs 5.3 crores to provide better ambience and shopping experience to the citizens.

“We are working on this much-awaited transformation by improving urban services, creation of urban infrastructure and improved system of urban governance to make the cities ecologically sustainable, economically productive and socially equitable,” Sinha said.

“I believe through physical and economic regeneration of our cities and its infrastructure, we can provide citizens an attractive environment to live and work and fulfill the needs of businesses,” the LG observed.

He also said it is equally important that residents should proactively participate in the urban rejuvenation programs to improve the quality of life.

“Smart City is a people’s movement to make the cities sustainable, efficient to provide improved services to the citizens. We need to come together and realize the dream of Smart City by working in cohesion,” he added.

“Today we are facing many challenges due to rapid global change but they can be successfully tackled through better services, better planning, implementation and good governance. We are also making dedicated efforts to create an eco-system so that urban and rural economy would complement each other instead of being dependent on each other,” said the LG.

Quoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi as saying that “every city has a unique culture and their development also takes place traditionally and it is necessary to save that cultural heritage while developing the cities,” the LG said, “We are developing our cities with the same spirit. We are keeping the spirit of cities alive and culture intact. We are making efforts to increase per capita income by providing opportunities to the people and improving the standard of living.”

The enlistment of Srinagar city in the UNESCO world creative cities network under the Craft & Folk Arts category is a proud moment for all, he said, adding that it is the collective responsibility of all the stakeholders associated with crafts and art to strengthen it and also revive the traditional handloom and handicrafts.

The LG also appreciated the efforts of SMC and other districts

of Kashmir division for continuous public services delivery during the harsh winter season.

“Srinagar Municipal Corporation has introduced various technical interventions, working continuously on good governance for the convenience of the common citizens and improving the public service delivery. Development works initiated today will strengthen the core infrastructure of Srinagar, besides opening up new avenues for the tourism sector and extending facilities to the locals,” the LG said.

Complementing SMC for the work done on graffiti and art in public places, the LG advised the Municipal Corporation to organize events like wall paintings in different areas to celebrate ‘Azadi ki Amrit Mahotsav’.

Several other projects including Control Room of ‘Adaptive Traffic Control System (ATCS)’ costing Rs 12.76 crore; Vehicle Mounted Manhole Desilting Machine and snow-clearance machines have been dedicated to the citizens of Srinagar to strengthen city’s infrastructure and to ensure efficient services are delivered in a sustainable manner, the handout informed.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta said that the new projects will add new attractions to Srinagar and increase tourist flux to the city.

He also announced on the occasion that the Dal Lake will be cleaned fully this year, besides the issue of sewage disposal of houseboats in the lake will be resolved by June this year.

Junaid Azim Mattu, Mayor, SMC said that the massive urban transformation projects dedicated to the people by the LG will give impetus to the ease of living of locals here and increase their standard of living.

Athar Aamir Khan, Commissioner, SMC and CEO Srinagar Smart City delivered the welcome address and briefed about the projects initiated.

The redevelopment of the famous Poloview Road includes pedestrian walkway, seating spaces, retractable bollards for emergency services, illumination, surveillance, improved drainage and Wi-Fi zone, the handout informed.

Adaptive Traffic Control System (ATCS) is being implemented under the AMRUT scheme within SMC limits. The scope of the project includes the establishment of a Control Room at SSP’s (Traffic) office and implementation of traffic lights at 33 junctions in Srinagar in Phase – I and 33 junctions in Phase –II, it was informed.

Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; M Raju, Commissioner/Secretary to the Government, Jal Shakti Department; Vijay Kumar, IGP Kashmir; Mohammad Aijaz, DC Srinagar; ULB representatives; concerned officers and people from all walks of life were present on the occasion.



LG INAUGURATES MUSICAL WATER FOUNTAIN WITH LASER, LIGHT & SOUND SHOW AT BAGH-E-BAHU

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated the Musical Water Fountain with Laser, Light & Sound Show at Bagh-e-Bahu.

The Lt Governor said that the Musical Water Fountain with Laser, Light & Sound Show is the first of its kind in the Jammu Region. This innovative project will showcase cultural heritage & take the tourism in Jammu to new heights, he added.

The Lt Governor observed that the unique amalgamation of heritage and modernity developed while keeping in mind the importance of historic Bahu fort will add to the aesthetics of Jammu city.

Jammu offers spiritual and scenic richness that is divine. It has vast tourism potential and we are developing 37 offbeat destinations in Jammu Division that will boost the economy and provide large number of jobs to the people, observed the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor said that the government is working on mission mode to transform the tourism sector of Jammu division and developing tourist places which were neglected for years.

Jammu is a treasure trove of culture, spirituality, tradition and literature. The beauty of Jammu division is truly mesmerizing and tourists have plenty of scenic locations to explore, observed the Lt Governor.

For many decades, the tourism potential of the Jammu division remained untapped. In the last two and a half years, our endeavours such as Ropeway project; Retreat Ceremony at Suchetgarh, Winter carnival & Lit-Fest at Patnitop and strengthening of infrastructure in various other districts are paying the dividend. We are committed to develop the Jammu region as a preferred tourist destination and create huge employment opportunities for youth, the Lt Governor said.

“As we are celebrating Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, Jammu & Kashmir, under the leadership of Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is heading towards an unprecedented development in every sector. Our efforts will continue to bring the culture & history of the UT on the world stage,” the Lt Governor observed.

Terming connectivity as the fundamental requirement of developing any tourist destination, the Lt Governor said: “under the guidance of the Hon’ble Prime Minister, an amount of rupees one lakh crore is being spent on highways, tunnels, and related infrastructure to bring J&K closer to the rest of the world.”

Infrastructure and road construction projects have picked up pace in Udhampur, Poonch, Rajouri, Kishtwar, Ramban, Doda, Samba, Kathua and Jammu. The construction of the much-awaited Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway will give further boost to tourism in the region, he added.

The Lt Governor said that more tourism spots and facilities are being developed to provide a much wider choice to the tourists.

J&K government, along with world’s leading travel tech platform, OYO Group, has recently launched rural home stay to encourage micro-entrepreneurs in rural areas. A special financial assistance of Rs 50,000 will be extended to the youth willing to establish a home stay unit, he added.

The Lt Governor said that the steadfast efforts of the UT Government have started showing results with record 26 lakh tourists and devotees coming to Jammu in September-October last year.

Tourism brings infrastructural development, better management of services, eliminates socio-economic imbalance, increases employment opportunities and develops the business sector, the Lt Governor said.

“Under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, the Hon’ble Prime Minister had given 37 projects worth Rs 197 crore only for Jammu division, out of which 35 projects have been completed. Two other projects, which include Rs 80 crores worth Maantalai’s Wellness Center and Bhagwati Nagar’s Amusement Park, will be completed by March this year.”

Similarly, many projects for Jammu division have been submitted to the central government under the PRASAD scheme. Two projects have got the approval of the Union Ministry of Tourism- the Pilgrimage Facility at Katra at a cost of Rs 51.5 cr and Shiv Shakti Dham and Choti Ganga Tourism Project costing Rs 38 crore. We have also approved the plan to complete 400 projects under CAPEX this year, the Lt Governor observed.

The Lt Governor stressed on the need to extend the outreach efforts under Central Government’s Dekho Apna Desh and Tourism for All, besides UT Government’s tourism promotion programs to create maximum awareness of the tourist potential areas of Jammu division. Special attention must be given to promote local products and maintain cleanliness at all tourist places, he added.

The Lt Governor congratulated the tourism department, district administration and the people of Jammu for the new tourism attraction.

Speaking on the occasion, Chander Mohan Gupta, Mayor, JMC termed the occasion as historic. He said that the first of its kind initiative will change the tourism landscape of Jammu region.

Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member Parliament said that the musical fountain project will prove to be a milestone for the tourism of Jammu.

Sarmad Hafeez, Administrative Secretary, Tourism Department, in his welcome address, informed that the facility, which came up at the cost of Rs 10.8 crores, having seating capacity of 400, will offer a unique experience to the locals and the tourists.

Vivekanand Rai, Director Tourism, Jammu delivered the Vote of Thanks.

People from all walks of life thronged Bagh-e Bahu to witness the inaugural laser and musical water show. The historical story-telling on Jammu, and the patriotic tunes synchronized with the musical water fountain received a huge round of applause from the crowd.

Vivek Bhardwaj, Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lt Governor; Mukesh Singh, ADGP Jammu; Dr Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner Jammu; Purnima Sharma, Deputy Mayor JMC; Anshul Garg, DC Jammu, public representatives, senior officials attended the inaugural ceremony.

J&K TO GO FULLY DIGITAL IN NEXT THREE MONTHS

'YOUR MOBILE OUR OFFICE' APP TO BE ROLLED OUT WITHIN 15 DAYS

Jammu: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, asked the department to speed up the development of UT dashboard and 'your mobile our office' app to enable J&K to go fully digital in next three months.

He made this comments in a meeting held to review the development of UT Dashboard. The meeting was attended by the secretaries of a few identified service oriented departments including IT secretary.

The objective of the portal will be to monitor the progress of various development schemes/activities of the government departments and will enable single point view/oversight to the top echelons of the J&K Government.

The implementation of the schemes will be assessed on a real time basis based on the key performance indicators identified/set out by the respective departments.

The Chief Secretary asked the IT department to integrate the DGGI dashboard with 50 indicators and 140 data points besides also incorporating the 55 beneficiary oriented schemes with the UT dashboard to make the dashboard a real time one stop viewing/monitoring platform for all the schemes in the UT.

He said going forward the scope and sweep of the dashboard can be further enhanced by adding more schemes and services including the deliverables assigned

to all the departments.

Earlier, IT Secretary, Prerna Puri made a small presentation on the progress achieved in developing the dashboard and outlined the steps being taken to roll out the initiative and 'your mobile our office' app.

Prerna said, 'your mobile our office' app is in the final stages of the development and will be rolled out shortly.

She said that in the beginning this app will be enabled to provide only five services on line on an end to end basis and the number of the services will be extended going forward based on the lessons learnt in the process.

Dr Mehta asked the department to launch 'your mobile our office' app within 15 days with 5 services to begin with. The Chief Secretary advised the department to also explore the possibility of providing 200 services available on Umang app on this app.

He asked the department to run the media campaigns about the utility of the app for the benefit of the people.

Saying that 'janbhagidgari' portal has become now more user friendly after it was moved to a different server, he asked the department to sensitise the people about the portal so that more and more people can avail its benefit and become truly empowered.

He added that the government's ongoing digital push will improve governance and public service delivery on a sustainable basis.

Administrative Council approves policy for promotion of foreign investment in industrial sector

GIVES NOD TO TRANSFER OF LAND FOR VARIOUS PUBLIC PURPOSES

Jammu: The Administrative Council (AC) which met here under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, approved the Policy for Promotion of Foreign Investment in the industrial sector in Jammu and Kashmir – 2022.

An official spokesman said that the new policy is based on the guiding framework of FDI issued by the Government of India through the RBI and DPIIT and will be valid for the next 10 years. It aims to facilitate large foreign investments greater than Rs.100 crore with a minimum of 51% foreign stakes.

The policy also provides for identifying parcels of land in various industrial estates to be given exclusively to industries with foreign investments including vertical rise premises in the form of multi-purpose buildings/complexes, with plug and play facilities, the spokesman said.

He said the land allotment process

will be regulated by the J&K Industrial Land Allotment Policy, 2021-30, whilst, such units will also be eligible for benefits, incentives, and support under the Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021-30 and New Central Sector Scheme for the industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir.

For optimal utilization of land resources and to provide integrated services to multiple players, the policy also envisages the establishment of multipurpose complexes for foreign investment by developing IT tower projects through private players in Sempora, Pampore and Exhibition Ground, Jammu. These towers will house different business activities and will form a part of the 'Industrial Complex for Foreign Investment,' said the spokesman.

The AC also approved the proposal of Revenue Department to transfer various parcels of land for public purposes.

It approved the transfer of land measuring 63 Kanal 04 Marla in favour of Higher Education Department for construction of a new Government Degree College in village Firsal, District Kulgam, the spokesman said, adding, the decision aims to provide quality higher education opportunities to stu-

dents of the region and boost employment of teaching and non-teaching staff through various recruiting agencies.

Moreover, the spokesman said, approval was given to the transfer of land measuring 02 kanal and 05 Marla in favour of Health & Medical Education Department for construction of a health centre at Jawaharpora in District Pulwama. Once completed, the institution will provide modern medical facilities to the people of the area.

He said that the Administrative Council further approved the transfer of land measuring 05 Kanal in favour of Revenue Department for construction of a police post at Newa at village Malawari, District Pulwama.

Another parcel of land measuring 148 Kanal situated in village Dambra, Tehsil Mahanpur, District Kathua was transferred in favour of Prisons Department for construction of High Security Prison in the district along with the transfer of State land measuring 160 Kanal 04 Marla under situated at village Dambra, Tehsil Mahanpur, District Kathua as Shamlat Deh (Mehfooz Kahcharai) in lieu of the land proposed for High Security Prison, said the spokesman.



JK-IGRAMS: OF 1,89,369 APPLICATIONS TAKEN UP FOR DISPOSAL IN MISSION MODE APPROACH, 1,85,123 RESOLVED

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha interacted with applicants of J&K Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System during “LG’s Mulaqaat- Live Public Grievance Hearing” through virtual mode, and took first hand appraisal of people’s issues and grievances.

During the latest edition of the programme, several grievances of the applicants were redressed on the spot by the Lt Governor, an official spokesman in a statement issued here said.

“Our aim is to reduce redressal time of a grievance and response to every genuine complaint within a reasonable timeframe and it has also been our endeavor to ensure the principles of good governance bring accountability, transparency and better services to citizens,” the spokesman quoted LG as saying.

He said that during his interaction, LG said that quality of resolution of a grievance is crucial to promote social justice, faster development and people’s participation, adding, “We must ensure the disposal of every genuine public grievance to make the system more accountable, responsive and efficient.”

He also lauded the efforts of five best performing Administrative Departments, five best performing HoDs and DCs of best performing Districts in terms of resolving the grievances received on the JK-IGRAMS, said the spokesman.

The spokesman said that till now, 1,89,369 applications were taken up for disposal in mission mode approach. Of these, 1,85,123 have been resolved.

The Lt Governor directed the Deputy Commissioners to resume public outreach activity for better coverage of government schemes, enhanced interaction with common man and effective monitoring of big-ticket projects, said the spokesman.

Mohd Amin Dar of Kulgam would get a Pacca House under PMAY-Grameen, which is closely being taken up by the DC office Shopian, the Lt Governor was informed by the concerned Deputy Commissioner.

The spokesman said that Dilawar Ahmad Sheikh of Shopian

Our aim is to reduce redressal time of a grievance and response to every genuine complaint within a reasonable timeframe and it has also been our endeavor to ensure the principles of good governance bring accountability, transparency and better services to citizens...



appreciated the LG led administration for resolving the issue of water scarcity in orchards of his area and Shiv Kumar expressed his gratitude towards the chair for sanctioning of old age pension in favour of his grandmother Shanti Devi.

On the issue brought forth by the applicant Annayat Fayaz from Pulwama regarding repair work on the steel bridge (Bod-Kadal) over Laar Nallah, the Lt Governor sought details from the concerned officer of the PWD (R&B) department. The Engineer informed the chair that the work has been already tendered and shall be completed by March end, said the spokesman.

He said that the LG listened to the grievances of public from Pounthal, Jammu, Doda, Udhampur, Reasi, Ramban and ordered on the spot directions for redressal.

Rehana Batul Commissioner/Secretary, Public Grievances moderated the monthly program of LG’s Mulaqaat while informing the chair about the progress and status of grievances received on JK-IGRAMS, said the spokesman.

‘Only domiciles having immovable property eligible for participation in bid process’

Jammu: Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Atal Dulloo, reiterated that the new excise policy would ensure that only single vend is secured by a bidder whose eligibility has been capped to the domiciles of Jammu and Kashmir only.

ACS, while announcing the ‘Excise Policy 2022-23’ here at Excise Taxation Complex, maintained that the policy would bring greater social consciousness and awareness about harmful effects of liquor consumption and drug abuse. He further said that it would also put an effective check on the menace of bootlegging and smuggling of all narcotic drugs in J&K from neighboring states and UTs.

It was informed that besides making quality liquor available to consumers this policy would encourage transition from high to low alcoholic content beverages to safeguard the health of consumers.

Regarding changes to ensure that no evasion of rules occurs and the vends go under auction in a transparent manner, it was apprised that the e-auction portal would be governed by J&K bank as a 3rd party nodal agency.

The policy has added features of encouraging local production by exempting export duty on all kinds of liquor for the policy year 2022-23. It would also fulfill the need of providing quality drink to consumers in unserved/underserved areas as some new vends have been proposed in the policy.

The department has made certain amendments in the previous policy by increasing Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 7 lakh and Minimum Guaranteed Revenue (MGR) by 10 per cent.

Moreover, the bidder should be having good character without being convicted for any non-bailable offense. It has also been added that the bidder should have immovable property equivalent to 100% of bid amount in the UT and should not be defaulter of taxes department under different acts governing J&K.

The policy has also framed timelines under which different activities of bidding would be carried out and a bidder has to deposit

the bid amount in a period of 10 working days. The successful bidder would also be given the license after receiving clearance from the concerned District Magistrate in a period of 15 days only.

On the occasion, Commissioner Excise, K S Chib; Commissioner, Sales Tax, Showkat Aijaz Bhat; Director General Codes, SL Pandita and other officers and officials of the twin departments were present.

Meanwhile, Atal Dulloo in presence of Commissioner, State Taxes, Showkat Aijaz Bhat, released GST Audit Manual during a book release function held at Excise and Taxation Complex, Panamachowk, Jammu.

ACS emphasized that the Goods and Service Tax is a trust base regime wherein the taxpayers are required to self assess their tax liabilities and file the return. To ensure whether the taxpayer has made correct declaration regarding his liability the concept of audit plays a pivotal role in determining the same, he added.

The process of audit involves examination of records, returns and other documents required to be maintained by the registered person.

While appreciating this initiative of the State Taxes Department, Dulloo highlighted that the manual would act as a comprehensive guide to conduct audit under Goods and Services Tax Act and will also help in equipping the officers with requisite skills in audit and scrutiny.

Showkat Aijaz Bhat highlighted that the guidelines provided in the manual are intended to ensure that the audit of taxpayer is carried out in a professional and efficient manner while adhering to the stipulated principles and policies as per the best international practices.

The function was also attended by Director (Codes) Finance Department, J&K, along with Additional Commissioner, State Taxes (Administration and Enforcement) Jammu and other officers of the department.



JKI PRODUCTS TO BE AVAILABLE AT RELIANCE MART & LIFESTYLE OUTLETS

Jammu: Silk and Woollen products of Jammu and Kashmir, known for their unique quality with traditional blends which contribute significantly in UT's economy, are again set to be promoted and marketed in a big way at National and International markets.

The Jammu and Kashmir government, as part of its endeavour towards reviving the economy of J&K, has roped in two Indian leading national business hubs to help employment generation in the Union Territory.

Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department, Ranjan Prakash Thakur, during a review of Jammu and Kashmir Industries Limited, informed that Reliance Trends and Lifestyle would be selling silk fabrics and products being manufactured by JKI Limited. In this regard, an MoU has been signed between JKI and Reliance.

He informed that, over the last three years, the government has invested heavily on the revival of JKI through development of its infrastructure by procurement of technologically advanced machinery. JKI has successfully commissioned the new silk weaving and reeling units in Jammu besides upgrading silk factory Rajbagh, Bemina woollen mills and Wool spinning units located at Solina and Nowshera respectively.

With the revival of JKI, the livelihood of a vast number of people associated with cocoon rearing and wool production has been secured. Besides, JKI is now providing a ready market for their produce within J&K at very lucrative prices. This has not only economically benefited the people associated with production of silk and wool but has also resulted in revival of silk and wool sectors in J&K significantly.

J&K KVIB RELEASES RS 348.48 CR AS MARGIN MONEY IN FAVOUR OF ENTREPRENEURS

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir Khadi and Village Industries Board (J&K KVIB) has released a whopping amount of Rs. 348.48 crore as margin money (subsidy) in favour of entrepreneurs who had applied for loans from the board since 2019.

These details were given in a presser held by Vice Chairperson KVIB, Dr Hina Shafi Bhat at Press Club, Jammu.

VC informed that the board has released this amount to 15,459 unit holders under JK Rural Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP) and Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) directly benefiting 118,188 individuals of the UT in these 3 years.

Dr Bhat said that KVIB has no cap on extending assistance to local youth and can provide handholding to any number of youth willing to start their enterprises in the UT. She said that the board has created employment avenues for lakhs of educated unemployed, poor, down-trodden and marginal sections of the society.

She also revealed that KVIB under the mission 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' is ensuring its reach to all segments of the society. She stated that 5338 women entrepreneurs have been assisted by the board under its various programmes including providing subsidy of Rs. 1.58 crore to 49 ex-servicemen and war widows.

Besides, J&K KVIB is establishing eight clusters under handloom, handicrafts and beekeeping sectors under Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of traditional Industries (SFURTI) of Union Ministry of MSME, she informed. She added that the scheme aims at protecting the interests of traditional artists and craftsmen who have adopted the traditional trades for earn-



ing their livelihoods. She informed that the clusters are being established with an approved assistance of Rs 20 crore from the Union Ministry of MSME involving 10000 artisans/beekeepers, directly and indirectly, in line with the promises made by PM Modi.

Under the National Scheduled Caste Scheduled Tribe Hub (NSSH) scheme the board has conducted 23 awareness camps, 10 workshops, 10 vendor development programmes and 06 exhibitions besides imparting training to 922 SC and ST candidates under Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP).

Dr Bhat said that she encourages the youth of J&K to apply for the relevant schemes being implemented by the board. She said that it could be done online by following a few simple steps before submitting

their applications for availing the benefits on offer.

Regarding the role of board during the ensuing pandemic, VC highlighted that KVIB has worked hard in fighting Covid-19 by manufacturing more than 11 lakh masks through its Khadi institutions and PMEGP/JKREGP unit holders thereby creating approximately 10,500 man days of work. The masks were supplied to district administrations, government organizations, police and military forces.

VC also announced that a major chunk of youth resides in urban areas and the board is contemplating to start the J&K Urban Employment Generation Programme (JKUEGP) to reach out to them so that these educated, unemployed youth get employment for earning their livelihoods respectfully.

DGP orders constitution of special teams for handling cyber-crime investigations

Srinagar: Director General of Police Dilbagh Singh Wednesday ordered constitution of teams of well-trained officers for handling cyber-crime investigation in Jammu and Kashmir

In this regard, a circular was issued and forwarded to the special DGP Crime, J&K, ADGP, Jammu Zone and IGP Kashmir.

The circular asks these officers to form teams of well-trained officers to handle cyber-crime investigations in each unit or wing.

The circular also stresses for observing 'cyber

awareness day" on the first Wednesday of every month to create awareness on cyber related frauds in all vernacular languages.

"The awareness may include Phishing simulations, Quiz Contacts, lectures, Audio-Visuals presentation on "Best Practices", Social Media Hygiene, Short films, Poster/leaflet etc, in local languages, Intelligence operations "whole of nation" in order to educate public and private sector and increase cyber resilience of the national event," reads the circular.



Rs 10 crores to be earmarked for skill development of tribal youth

Jammu: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta chaired a meeting to review the functioning of the Tribal Affairs Department.

The Administrative Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department, Director Tribal Affairs Department, and concerned officers of the Department participated in the meeting.

The Chief Secretary was apprised about the outcome of the first-ever survey of the transhumant population in Jammu and Kashmir which has captured various socio-economic indicators of this segment of population.

It was informed that the Tribal Affairs Department has taken various flagship initiatives during 2021-22 for the welfare of the beneficiaries with a focus on implementation of Forest Rights Act, tribal tourist villages scheme, cluster tribal model villages, tribal health plans, and transit facilities.

The Chief Secretary was apprised about the deficient mobile/internet connectivity and limited availability of health facilities at higher pastures and dhoks. The Chief Secretary directed the Department to ensure mobile and internet coverage of all tribal habitations, besides, establishment of teleconsultation medical facilities specifically in dhoks; within 6 months. It was further directed that the local youth is provided with adequate first-aid training to tackle emergency situations, besides ensuring primary health care facilities at base camps, in consultation with the National Health Mission.

Under the Integrated Village Development Scheme, the Tribal Affairs Department is undertaking various projects to improve the parameters of health and nutrition, drinking water and sanitation, education, livelihood, electricity supply, road connectivity, and mobile and internet connectivity; in the tribal habitations.

Dr. Mehta emphasized on holistic development of the community and directed initiation of slew of measures to be accomplished in a time-bound manner. It was decided that intensive efforts will be

undertaken for saturation of aadhaar cards, golden health cards, bank accounts, besides ensuring vaccinations of livestock.

The Department was also given the target of doubling income of the tribal population by focusing on integrated development of wool, milk, and forest-based industries. The Department was further asked to complete the pending FRA cases within three months and ensure the formulation of TSP by all departments within one week.

The Chief Secretary was also apprised about the pilot project to assist the bi-annual tribal transhumance in Jammu and Kashmir by providing dedicated vehicular transportation facilities. The Chief Secretary directed broadening the scope of the project by facilitating the migration preferably through national highway in vehicular mode.

The Department was also asked to establish a tribal helpline number and ensure completion of all 08 transit accommodations by July 2022 with 02 to be completed by the end this financial year.

Moreover, Dr. Mehta impressed upon the Department to prioritize skilling of tribal youth through the network of youth clubs and asked Mission Youth to exclusively provide gainful employment opportunities to the eligible youth from tribal areas for which Rs. 10 crores will be specifically earmarked. The Department was also asked to promote tourism in tribal areas by roping in various stakeholders.

To promote education among the targeted population, the Department is establishing Eklavya Model Residential Schools in Anantnag, Kulgam, Gurez, Kotranka, Rajouri and Mendhar which will commence operations from April 2022.

On the occasion, the Chief Secretary also launched the departmental scholarship portal for streamlining the disbursement of scholarships to tribal students. With the launch of the portal, Rs. 12 crore were disbursed to the eligible beneficiaries through DBT by the Chief Secretary. The Department is providing scholarships to more than 2.02 lakh students from the tribal community.

Forest dept to restore degraded forest area, repair village ponds to recharge ground water

Jammu: Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta on Monday directed the Forest department to restore 1000 square kilometres of degraded forest area during the next year in convergence with the funds available under labour component.

The Chief Secretary also directed the department to repair 3,700 village ponds within next six months so as to recharge the groundwater and improve the whole ecosystem of lives and livelihoods in the villages.

Terming forests as an important climate mitigation strategy, Dr Mehta asked the department to involve local communities/panchayats in applying deep knowledge of the local ecology in restoring their commons.

He made these comments in a meeting held to review UT capex of the Forest department.

According to an official press release, hailing the departmental initiative 'Van se Jal - Jal se Jivan', the Chief Secretary said the campaign has to be focused more in areas of water stress in J&K and the views of the local people should also be sought in making this programme a success.

Urging the department to achieve the target of plantation of 1.3 crore plants set for this year, he said there is also a need to focus plantation in vulnerable areas, particularly on the highways where green cover can help in slope stabilization and prevent landslides.

Earlier Commissioner Secretary, Forests, Sanjeev Verma made a presentation on UT capex in which he gave a broad overview of the UT capex during the current fiscal year.

Verma informed that out of Rs 90 cr released by the Finance department from an approved outlay of Rs 132 cr, the department has incurred an expenditure of Rs 70 cr till 15th February, 2022.

He said the department will fully spend the funds released by the Finance department during the current fiscal year.

PCCF, Mohit Gera informed that out of a total of 20,194 sq km of the forest area in J&K, around 2,250 sq km forest area has degraded. He said the department on an average restores 100-200 sq km of the degraded forest area in a year.

The Chief Secretary directed the department to restore 1000 sq km forest area during the next year in convergence with the funds available under labour component under MGNREGA.

It was informed that the campaign 'Har Gaon Hariyali' has been well received by the people at large and the panchayats in the UT are locked in a healthy competition of outdoing one another on the issue of plantation.



PCCF informed that the department has set a target of planting 1.3 cr plants this year and it is on course to meeting the target.

The department informed that out of 3,700 traditional village ponds identified in the UT, requiring repair and reconstruction, 57 ponds have been taken up under UT capex for repair during this financial year and so far 37 ponds have been reconstructed.

The Chief Secretary directed the department to repair all 3,700 ponds within next six months in convergence with MGNREGA.

He said repair and rejuvenation of these ponds will recharge the groundwater and improve the whole ecosystem of lives and livelihood in the villages.

Saying that the practice of the people feeding monkeys on the national highways/tourist places has to be stopped, the Chief Secretary said the department needs to improve enforcement through heightened vigil and imposition of fines to deter people from doing so as it causes unnecessary accidental deaths of monkeys.

Dr Mehta said the department needs to put a high premium on climate mitigation and ensure that vehicular pollution is effectively checked and the violators are suitably penalized.

He asked the department to ensure that visibly polluting vehicles from outside the UT are not allowed entry at Lakhanpur border.

The Chief Secretary directed the

department to erect hoardings/billboards at Lakhanpur border carrying unequivocal directions from the department for the interstate commuters that the vehicles not conforming to the pollution norms will not be let into J&K.

Holding plastic litter on the roadsides and in and around forest areas as the terrible pollutant and eye sore, he asked the department to mount a campaign titled 'Say No to Plastics' in the media, advising the people against the use of the plastics.

Dr Mehta also asked the department to spearhead a plastic cleanliness campaign on war footing across J&K.

Appreciating the conservation works carried out in the surroundings of the Wullar Lake, the Chief Secretary said the unrivalled beauty of the lake needs to be celebrated and asked the department to hold Wullar Lake festivals thrice- during spring, summer and autumn- in a year.

Dr Mehta lauded the effort of the department in starting 12-day training for 20 youth of the Kishtwar district for Eco Guides and asked the department to connect them with the youth clubs and the Mission Youth for availing incentives to buy trekking gear like tents, other camping material, etc.

He said post-training, these youth can use the trekking gear while as guides for the tourists on the identified trekking routes in this region and earn a living for themselves.

Dr Mehta said this will also spur the growth of wildlife tourism in the region.

J&K to create 4 innovation hubs under NEP



Jammu: Principal Secretary Higher Education Department, Rohit Kansal reiterated that the J&K Government is committed to supporting the Indian Institute of Technology Jammu and other institutions to build a culture of innovation and growth. He also committed to supporting innovation hubs not just in IIT Jammu but in other universities in J&K also.

He also announced that the entire process would be enlarged and a J&K wide start up contest would be organized soon. The Higher Education department would support and facilitate a J&K wide version of the event which would be organized by the IIT and supported by the government.

He made these remarks while speaking at a prize distribution ceremony of the first-ever I2EDC Pitch Desk Competition-2022 held at IIT Jammu here.

The first-ever completion witnessed an overwhelming response from innovators all over the Jammu and Kashmir during which three teams were conferred prizes for the first three places which include: Team BB & GG from SKAUST-K (Rs one lakh) bagged first prize while as Team Azad Identity Solutions (Rs 50,000) from IIT Jammu and Team Manukrishi (Rs 25000) bagged second and third prize respectively.

The organizer of this competition was I2EDC (Institute Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Centre) also known as the Idea Factory of IIT Jammu whose job is to help in incubating promising startups not just from IIT Jammu but also from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

I2EDC hosted an early stage idea pitch deck competition open to the community of all higher education institutes as well as research labs in JK UT and Ladakh in the month of January. The competition received over 70 registrations, and 35+ valid entries from the

Union Territory.

Speaking at the ceremony, Kansal observed that we are living in the age of innovation and the I2EDC Pitch Desk Competition-2022 was a first but very significant step in this direction.

He confirmed that the government stands committed in supporting IIT Jammu in all their innovation efforts and are going to take this forward to expand the scope of this exercise to enable it to reach a much larger audience set.

“We will expand our support in size as well as scope whereby IIT Jammu shall be developed as an incubation hub; we will also support other institutions and universities in J&K by mapping up these incubators with spokes that we will create in all our colleges. The resultant culture of innovation, growth and progress will benefit not just J&K but the entire nation,” Kansal said.

On the occasion, he congratulated all the participants and hoped that the innovators and entrepreneurs will continue in their endeavours.

Director IIT Jammu, Dr Manoj Singh Gaur; Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical Engineering, IIT Jammu and Head I2EDC, Dr Amit Kumar Singh; Professor Incharge Incubation, Prof Rakesh Singhai among other also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the role of innovation and startups in entrepreneurship.

On the occasion, the institute also announced multiple levels of hackathons where all the entrepreneurs and innovators throughout J&K will be invited and will later on also to be opened to all over India.

The IIT Jammu will support the innovators in prototyping with proper guidance while also proving to connect with industry so that developed products can be marketed and startups can grow and have exponential growth as well

JKTPO sponsored startups shine at ‘India First Startup Conclave and Awards’ 2022

New Delhi: Union Minister of State in Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), Dr Jitender Singh, visited the ‘India First Startup & Conclave 2022’ being organized at Hotel Le Meridian by All India Council for Robotics and Automation (AICRA).

Dr Singh interacted with the young entrepreneurs present in the conclave.

While interacting with Shivaang Satya Gupta, Dr Singh appreciated the efforts of ESPA Learn Private Limited EdTech.

“India is emerging as the world’s preferred StartUp destination due to its vast unexplored potential coupled with an entrepreneurship friendly environment being provided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi,” Union MoS maintained during interaction.

Managing Director, Jammu Kashmir Trade Promotion Organization (JKTPO), Ankita Kar, also visited the stalls of J&K start ups set up in the conclave.

Pertinently, JKTPO sponsored 15 startups from J&K at the event. JKTPO is J&K government undertaking incorporated as a

Joint Venture of Government of J&K, Indian Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO) and Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH).

Among the startups were Espa Learn Private Limited and Espa Fee Private Limited.

Ankita Kar admired the ideas being implemented by bright brains of J&K. “For making processes and the technology sector relevant, JKTPO has worked hard to showcase the efforts being put in by startups in Jammu and Kashmir,” she said.

ESPA Group of Companies had three unique startups in the event including ESPA Learn Private Limited, ESPA FEE Private Limited and ESPA Lines Private Limited. Shivang Satya Gupta, Chairman, ESPA Group, attended the event as Director Promotions for these companies.

Shivang Satya Gupta explained his vision and modern IT interventions being used in the start ups and expressed that it would be highly useful for the target groups. He also invited the prospective

2022 to be the year of educational transformation in J&K: CS



Jammu: Chief Secretary Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta on Monday impressed upon the educational institutions to build on the experience of online classes and adopt an ideal blend of IT-based offline teaching curriculum to boost students' learning outcomes and successfully train them for national-level examinations.

"The academic year 2022-23 shall be the year of educational transformation for Jammu and Kashmir," Dr. Mehta maintained.

He emphasised that each head of the institution shall be personally responsible for Covid management and a healthy teaching environment. There should be no tolerance for unhealthy activities in places of learning.

Additionally, the Higher Education Department and School Education Department were asked to fully implement the National Education Policy across Jammu and Kashmir during 2022, thereby making the Union territory, the first among in the country to do so.

Dr. Mehta made these assertions during a meeting to take stock of arrangements for reopening of educational institutions and resuming offline teaching in Jammu and Kashmir.

Additional Chief Secretary, Health & Medical Education, Principal Resident Commissioner, New Delhi, administrative secretaries of the departments of Skill Development, Higher Education, School Education, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Recon-

struction, Vice Chancellors of all universities, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir, Deputy Commissioners, and concerned HoDs participated in the meeting, an official press release informed.

It was informed that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has been regularly reviewing the COVID situation in the Union territory and has now decided to resume offline teaching by reopening all educational institutions.

The Chief Secretary stated that the COVID positivity rate in the UT has been contained to 0.7 percent and impressed upon the Heads of all educational institutions to remain vigilant to any signs of infection especially among unvaccinated students below the age of 17 years, besides ensuring adherence to COVID-appropriate behavior, SoPs and protocols; proper social-distancing; and hand hygiene provisions, and compliance to UGC guidelines in the matter.

Dr. Mehta asked the Vice-Chancellors of universities, Principals of colleges, and Heads of all schools to submit COVID prevention and mitigation plans taking into account capacity of class rooms with 6 feet norm, staggered teaching plan, COVID protocols, vaccination, screening, and emergency SoP; within two days.

Further, to enhance effectiveness of COVID mitigation and management, the Chief Secretary advised the educational institutions to base their COVID management plans on the model UGC guidelines.

The education institutions were further asked to regularly screen their students and ensure that symptomatic students are tested timely and isolated to prevent the spread of infection. Meanwhile, the Health and Medical Education department was also asked to address the health-related needs of all schools, colleges, and universities in a time-bound manner, through the concerned divisional and district administrations.

Considering the educational institutions in Jammu & Kashmir are reopening for offline classes after a hiatus of almost two years, Dr. Mehta impressed upon the concerned to ensure proper maintenance, upkeep, and cleanliness in the institutions along with functional electricity and water supplies as well as proper sanitation facilities therein.

Institute launched for research, studies on Kashmiri Shaivism

Jammu: Kashmir Shaiva Institute has been launched as the first research, studies and publications centre on Kashmir Shaivism in Jammu and Kashmir on Monday, officials said.

The institute will reach out to all educational institutes across the country and globe to promote Kashmiri Shaivism, a senior official said.

Kashmir Shaivism, or Trika Shaivism, is a non-dualist tradition of Shaiva-Shakta Tantra which originated sometime after 850 CE. Since this tradition originated in Kashmir it is often called "Kashmiri Shaivism".

It later went on to become a pan-Indian movement termed 'Trika' (The Trinity) by its great exegete, sage Abhinavagupta, and particularly flourished in Odisha, Karnataka and Maharashtra.

"Kashmir Shaiva Institute has been launched here as first research, studies, teaching and publication centre of ex-



cellence across the globe on Kashmir Shaivism", Secretary KSI Vijay Kumar Kaul told reporters here.

The institute was setup by the globally acknowledged Ishwar Ashram Trust on Kashmir Shaivism.

J&K Bank wins best performance award for implementing PMEGP in North India



SRINAGAR: J&K Bank has been ranked No. 1 by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (GoI) under Khadi India Awards for its excellent performance in implementing the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) in North India.

Presiding over the felicitation ceremony Chairman, Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Vinai Kumar Saxena presented the top performance award for the financial year 2020-21 to Zonal Head Delhi Kirti Sharma who represented J&K Bank during the Zonal Level PMEGP Review Meeting held on Monday at Panchkula in Haryana.

Expressing his pleasure on winning the 4th honour in succession, MD & CEO Baldev Prakash attributed the reception of consecutive awards to persistent and dedicated efforts put in by the staff besides uninterrupted Government support for systematic financial empowerment of the people especially youth across the operational geography of the Bank.

He said, "The award will go a long way in boosting the motiva-

tion of our staff, which is the key factor in determining the success of every organisational undertaking, to further the mission of financial empowerment through effective and efficient interventions."

"However, while providing satisfaction to all of us, such recognition for hard-work from prestigious platforms also raises expectations of all our stakeholders. And with full faith in your capacities, I hope together in future, we will excel further and keep providing our stakeholders occasions to cheer and feel proud of this premier financial institution," he added.

Notably, the bank contributed around 50 pc to the total achievement under the PMEGP Scheme in the entire north India, which ranked first among all the regions in the implementation of the scheme. Pertinent to mention, the Bank recently bagged the 'Best Digital Financial Inclusion Initiatives' Award, second position in 'Best IT Risk & Cyber Security Initiatives' at Indian Bank's Association's 17th Annual Banking Technology Conference and Awards: 2020-21 and 4th Position in Khadi India Awards from Ministry of MSME (GoI) for PMEGP implementation in the country.

JKTPO sponsored startups shine at 'India First Startup Conclave and Awards' 2022

IMPROVED VERSION OF ERSS-112 ACTIVATED ACROSS J&K

Srinagar:: An improved version of Emergency Response Support System (ERSS-112) is now active across J&K, police informed Friday.

Giving details, a police handout informed that the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) is a pan-India integrated single emergency helpline number for various emergency services such as Police, Fire & Emergency Services, Medical Services, Social Welfare and Disaster Management, etc.

It said the emergency number "112" provides 24x7 emergency responses and immediate assistance to the callers in distress, besides a special desk for assistance of women in distress is also functional.

ERSS is designed to address all emergency signals received from citizens through voice calls, SMS, e-mail, panic SOS signal, ERSS web

portal, etc.

As per the official handout, "an SOS alert can be activated through the '112-Mobile app' anytime when you feel your safety or the safety of another is in imminent danger. The exact location of the person in distress is forwarded to the Control Room and the location of the victim is displayed on the GIS map of the call-taker."

Giving details of accessing it, the handout says in case of any SOS alert or emergency assistance from Police, Fire or Ambulance etc, please follow: 1. Dial-112 from Phone/Landline 2. Send SMS to 112. 3. Press the power button on the Smartphone 3 times in quick succession to activate panic call. 4. Log-on to ERSS-JK website <https://jk.erss.in/> and place your SOS request 5. Email SOS alert to Emergency Response System on dial-112@jcpolice.gov.in, 6. Using 112 India mobile app (available on Google Playstore and Apple Store) to activate panic call.

This is for the information of the general public as the ERSS is functional throughout the UT of J&K. For any queries or questions please visit <https://jk.erss.in/faq.html>



EMERGENCY NUMBER

"112"

PROVIDES 24x7 EMERGENCY RESPONSES AND IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE TO THE CALLERS IN DISTRESS, BESIDES A SPECIAL DESK FOR ASSISTANCE OF WOMEN IN DISTRESS IS ALSO FUNCTIONAL...

Chief Secretary launches One Stop G2C e-services for Srinagar district

Srinagar: Emphasizing added efficiency and accountability in functioning of government offices, Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, exhorted upon the officers to put in regular efforts towards enhancing public service delivery to ensure more responsive and transparent governance to people.

Chief Secretary stated this while chairing a high level meeting held here to assess progress on different sectors in Kashmir valley including district development plan and various other government programs for Srinagar district, an official communique issued here said.

It said the meeting was attended by Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, PK Pole; IGP Kashmir, Vijay Kumar; Director SKIMS, Chief Conservator of Forests Kashmir, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Director General Social Welfare Kashmir, Director General Horticulture Kashmir, Commissioner SMC, Mission Director, NHM, MD KPDCL, VC LCMA, Principal GMC Srinagar, Directors of School Education Kashmir, Industries and Commerce Kashmir, Rural Development Kashmir, Tourism Kashmir, Fisheries, Urban Local Bodies, Agriculture Kashmir, Sheep Husbandry Kashmir and Animal Husbandry Kashmir besides Chief Engineers of all wings and HoDs of line departments.

Chief Secretary asked the officers to initiate proper IEC activities in each department so that maximum people are made aware about various services and beneficiary oriented schemes being LAUNCHED by the government. He also directed them to further improve and enhance the public service delivery system through use of technological interventions and innovations besides optimally utilizing available resources, said the communique.

It said that Dr. Mehta exhorted upon the concerned departments to take up major procedure simplifications under different schemes by doing away with unnecessary compliance burden and use of technological interventions to further streamline the service delivery.

While reviewing progress of health sector across Kashmir valley, Chief Secretary asked the Principal GMC, Director Health Services and Director SKIMS to properly maintain cleanliness and hygiene in hospitals which is imperative for patient care. He also directed them to prepare digital record of patient prescriptions and other medical tests through proper mobile applications or website so that a patient can access it while on the go, said the communique.

It further said that the Chief Secretary asked the Director to provide free medicines to locals at District Hospitals and initiate an awareness campaign for the same so that maximum people are made aware about this facility.

While reviewing tourism sector of Kashmir valley, Dr. Mehta asked the Direc-



tor tourism to enhance facilities at tourist locations so that locals as well as the visitors from outside don't face any inconvenience.

'Apart from traditional tourist places like Pahalgam, Gulmarg, Sonmarg and others the unexplored locations should also be made available for public with proper facilities established there', the communique quoted the CS asking the officers.

Dr. Mehta asked the department to explore more ways of developing rural tourism in synergy with Mission Youth, J&K, so that the rural youth get self employment through 'Home Stay' programme recently initiated by the J&K government. He further directed them to start 'One Activity a day' in every tourist destination from March this year to give more recreational options for the tourists as well as locals visiting these places.

While assessing progress of Agriculture sector, Chief Secretary asked the officers to launch 'Two Seasons-Two Crops' campaign across the valley so that no area remains under single crop cultivation and maximum production of different varieties is obtained. He also asked them for 100% distribution of Soil Health cards so that people get aware about the productivity of their land and proper sowing of crops as per soil health, said the communique.

Chief Secretary, while reviewing progress of Rural Development Department, R&B, PMGSY, FCS&CA and other essential departments, asked the officers for effective implementation of all programmes and policies for transformation in development profile.

While highlighting present administration's motto of 'Road to Every Village', CS asked the officers of PMGSY to ensure coverage of all habitations under their schemes, the communique said, adding, while assessing progress on district devel-

opment plan and various other government schemes for district Srinagar, Chief Secretary impressed upon the officers to ensure completion of all ongoing works within prescribed timelines. He cautioned that no lackadaisical approach shall be entertained while executing these works.

He also directed the officers to streamline traffic management across the city besides properly using recently launched Adaptive Traffic Control System (ATCS) to deal with traffic. He directed the officers of district administration and traffic police to develop alternative routes for decongestion of traffic in and around the city.

Assessing progress on several beneficiary oriented schemes like KCC, PM Kisan, SEHAT, PM Social Security Scheme and others, Chief Secretary impressed upon the DC Srinagar to generate awareness among the public about these schemes so that maximum people take benefit. He also directed the DC Srinagar to ensure distribution of Tri-Lingual Land Pass Books among all eligible persons of Srinagar district by end of March this year, the communique said.

As per the communique, the CS said that the projects under Smart City Mission will add new attractions to Srinagar and increase tourist flux to the city. He directed the CEO Smart City to execute all the works as per given date-lines so as to make Srinagar one of the most beautiful cities around the world.

The communique further said that on the occasion, Chief Secretary launched one stop G2C e-services for district Srinagar. Under this platform, the citizens of Srinagar city can avail online facilities of obtaining income certificate, marriage certificate, character certificate, reserve category certificate and other services.



First-time buyers in housing sector to get 50% stamp duty remission

Srinagar: The J&K government approved the remission of fifty percent (50%) stamp duty for all first-time buyers of real estate in the housing sector for a period of two years.

The decision was taken by the Administrative Council at a meeting headed by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also attended by Farooq Khan and Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisors to the LG, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, J&K, and Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the LG.

An official spokesman of the J&K government said the decision is “aimed at giving a boost to the real-estate sector in Jammu and Kashmir and motivating the new buyers to participate in the market”.

“It is also expected to provide momentum to property sale

and registration by making the purchase of property attractive and affordable.”

The Administrative Council also asked the Housing and Urban Development Department to work out the modalities for smooth implementation of the decision at the earliest.

Earlier, in a bid to attract investment, promote infusion of technology, and create employment opportunities in the real estate sector, the government hosted the first-ever Real Estate Summit in J&K in December last year, wherein several promoters in residential/retail/commercial space, film & entertainment industry, tourism & hospitality, logistics & warehousing, and financing institutions, participated, and shared their wisdom for the collective vision of the growth of the sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

AC reserves industrial estate at Udhampur for women entrepreneurs

APPROVES SETTING UP INFRASTRUCTURE FOR WOMEN BATTALIONS

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government declared the industrial estate at Udhampur as ‘women industrial estate’ to promote women entrepreneurship in the Union Territory.

“To promote women entrepreneurs in Jammu and Kashmir, the administrative council (AC) under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, today (Friday) declared the industrial estate at Seen-Thakran in Udhampur as women industrial estate,” according to an official spokesman.

In a first-of-its-kind decision, the administrative council declared the Industrial Estate at Seen, Thakran, Udhampur as reserved for women entrepreneurs and women-led industries, he said.

The decision will benefit women entrepreneurs and industrialists as any business enterprise having a minimum of 51 percent stake held by a woman entrepreneur shall qualify to apply for allotment in reserved industrial estate, he said.

Moreover, under the new J&K Industrial Land Allotment Policy, the eligible women entrepreneurs will be allotted suitable parcels of land through a transparent single-window mechanism in a time-bound manner.

Meanwhile, the Administrative Council also approved setting up of infrastructure for women battalions at several places in the union territory, officials said.

The AC accorded administrative approval for construction work for women battalions at Sopore, Baramulla and Pargalta, Jammu, an official spokesman said.

Farooq Khan and Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, advisors to the LG, Arun Kumar Me-



hta, Chief Secretary, and Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the LG, attended the meeting, he said.

The construction work will be carried out at an estimated cost of Rs 50 crore at each battalion and it will include administration blocks, residential accommodation and hostels, and office building, among others, the spokesman said.

CS inaugurates J&K Bank GSS e-portal for tracking of loan applications under govt schemes

Jammu: Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta Friday launched the J&K Bank GSS e-portal for real-time tracking of credit applications under government sponsored schemes and described it as an important step towards transparency in the processing of loan applications in the bank.

He said this initiative will address the longstanding concerns surrounding the processing of GS loan applications in the bank and enable the applicants and the sponsoring agencies to make timely interventions if and when necessary.

According to an official handout, Dr Mehta said the applicant has a right to know about the status of her/his loan applications, especially the reasons underlying rejection of application.

The inauguration was attended by secretaries in the government, MD and CEO J&K Bank, Baldev Prakash and other senior officials of the J&K Bank.

Earlier, MD and CEO J&K Bank made a small presentation in which he informed that with the roll out of the J&K Bank GSS e-portal, the physical processing of the applications will cease immediately.

He said that loan applications delayed beyond 15 days will generate exception reports for the higher authorities to step in for correction.

Prakash said that the portal also has a provision of transmission of

SMS requests to the applicants for completing the required loan related formalities.

Lauding the performance of J&K Bank, the Chief Secretary said it's a matter of pride that the bank has been adjudged as the best in the country in the domains of digital financial inclusion and cyber risk management and has been rated as the fourth best bank in the implementation of PMEGP in FY 2021-22.

He also congratulated the management upon improvement in the rating of the bank from negative to A+ stable.

Dr Mehta asked the department to enable the portal to send SMS alerts to the applicants intimating the reasons of rejection of their loan requests immediately after the rejections are made.

Dr Mehta asked the bank to ensure that this portal is mobile enabled and all 15 centrally sponsored schemes are integrated with the portal by March 15, 2022.

The Chief Secretary reiterated his earlier directions to the IT Secretary that the ongoing process of end to end digitization of all government schemes/deliverables must be completed by March 15.

He advised the bank to ensure that access to the portal dashboard is also given to the secretaries in the government within a week for oversight.

J&K Forest Department organizes Consultation Meeting on “Forests for Livelihood”

Jammu: As part of the Government's outreach programme to generate livelihood for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, the J&K Forest Department organized a one-day consultation meeting-cum-discussion on 'Forests for Livelihood'. The event was inaugurated by the Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta in presence of Sanjeev Verma, Commissioner/Secretary Forest Ecology and Environment Department.

The event focused on consultation with stakeholders for undertaking diverse activities for the creation of forest-based livelihood in Jammu and Kashmir; and was kicked off by an exhibition of forest-derived handicrafts, forest produce, and display technologies for processing of forest produce by various institutes of repute, followed by two technical sessions and a panel discussion.

In his address, the Chief Secretary highlighted the key role of Forests in sustaining the economy; supporting the livelihood of millions of people living around forests, and ecosystem services provided by forests, especially in a hilly region like J&K. Lauding the efforts of the Government to enhance green cover of Jammu and Kashmir by launching 'Green Jammu & Kashmir Drive' and 'One beat guard, One Village Programme' which have a great potential to enhance the livelihood of the communities through their active involvement; the Chief secretary also noted that greening of J&K is being carried out in all Village Panchyats under 'Har Gaon Haryali' campaign with the involvement of PRIs and Biodiversity Management Committees.

For the preservation of green cover, the Chief Secretary urged the Social Forestry Department to take the mission of 'Har Gaon Haryali', green villages, a step further to 'Har Ghar Haryali', green homes, in an attempt to encourage households to plant trees. He also suggested launching a movement on the lines of Har Nagar Ek Upvan, a green space for every town.

The Chief Secretary also appreciated the generation of livelihood by the Forest Department through its 'Eco-trek routes'. He also encouraged the members of SHGs, NGOs as well as the Forest Officers to actively work towards finding innovative solutions to engage a greater number of people in livelihood generation activities and conservation of forest resources.

He informed that there are 572 unique medicinal plants in J&K and called for formulating a detailed plan for each one of the plants. He directed the Commissioner Secretary and the PCCF Dr Mohit

Gera to spearhead the work in this regard and prepare a detailed plan for the cultivation, promotion, and marketing of these plants.

Suggesting more initiatives, the Chief Secretary directed the department to ideate on addressing fodder shortage in the region through forests. He called for making use of technology and afforestation activities to stabilize unstable mountain slopes and prevent landslides to prevent routine loss to the economy.

To address immediate environmental concerns, the Chief Secretary called upon the stakeholders to look for ingenious and innovative solutions instead of cost extensive engineering solutions alone for ecological projects. He also highlighted the evils of plastic waste and invited all to wage war against it. He also asked experts to find ways to generate income from plastic waste.

Similarly, wetlands were also told to be cleaned and rejuvenated. Healthy wetlands can generate a number of livelihood avenues, underlined the Chief Secretary.

Coming hard on encroachment of forest lands, the Chief Secretary said, that such activities would not be tolerated and all the guilty would be evicted by law. Forests are for the people and not for individual encroachers.

The Chief Secretary also interacted with various stakeholders including the Forest Department, ICFRE, HFRI, IIT Mandi, IIT Rourkee, TRIFED, Rural Livelihood Mission, National, and State Medicinal Plant Boards, various NGOs and Self Help Groups.

On the occasion, Dr. Mehta also released a brochure on "Pine Needles to Bio-Briquettes" compiled by the Forest Department.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner, Forests Department, Sanjeev Verma informed that the creation of livelihoods is being enhanced through various ways of afforestation, sustainable utilization of NTFP in convergence with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj. He also informed about the benefits of sustainable management of Forests towards meeting the SDGs, India's Nationally Determined Contribution, and Biodiversity Conservation.

Those present at the occasion include Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Dr. Mohit Gera; Addl. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Executive Officer, CAMPA, Sarvesh Rai among other senior officers from various departments and heads of various premier research and educational institutions of the country.



‘MISSION YOUTH ON COURSE TO CREATING 50000 SELF EMPLOYMENT JOBS’

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 28: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta has said that the youth in J&K need to be skilled according to their needs and aspirations to enable them to have not only gainful employment, but also a sense of dignity in the jobs they do.

He said that there is a need to sharply focus on skilling and up skilling of youth to improve their skills not only for better jobs but to enable them to set up their own ventures.

Dr Mehta said skilling and up skilling programmes have to be anchored in the concept of ‘learn to earn’.

Dr Mehta made these comments while chairing a meeting to review the progress under Mission Youth, an ambitious programme to empower unemployed 50000 youth in J&K through gainful employment.

He said the mission should focus on empowering youth to set up their ventures /start economic activities at new and upcoming 225 heritage/tourist/trekking destinations/sites/routes.

Dr Mehta asked CEO, mission youth to tap the youth in and around the areas of these 225 new and upcoming tourist/heritage/trekking sites/routes for skilling and assistance to enable them to make a living where it would matter to them the most.

He asked the mission to build the database of 5 lakh youth through youth clubs and other mission initiatives with aadhar numbers, mobile numbers and other relevant information in an effort to map their job requirements by the end of April 2022.

Dr Mehta said the facility to reach out to them through bulk sms, mail etc must also be ensured by the mission and added that it is important for the mission to know about the persons it is dealing with.

Earlier, CEO, Mumkin, Shahid Choudhary made a brief presentation on the progress made under various components under the Mission.

Shahid informed that while 4882 beneficiaries have been provided self employment under Mumkin scheme so far, 8000 beneficiaries will be provided self employment by the end of the current fiscal year.

Under Tejaswani scheme, the Mission has provided financial support to 3447 young women entrepreneurs to take up self-employment ventures across various sectors of the econo-



my.

CEO, Mission said a total of 6600 young women will be covered under Scheme by the close of the financial year.

Shahid said the mission is collaborating with DDCs, EDI and departments like sheep husbandry, skill development, tourism etc. and that it will not only meet the targets but also exceed them in some cases before the ongoing financial year draws to a close.

Saying the utility of resources can be multiplied through convergence, the chief secretary said mission must look to seek convergence with other departments in job creation/skill development.

He said a special task force comprising secretaries of a few departments shall be constituted to look into areas of convergence and also set out the measures for creating employment opportunities in the new and upcoming 225 destinations.

Dr Mehta asked the mission to follow aggregator approach and set up SHGs for resource/economic multiplier effect and added that such groups can be skilled/trained to make their living using forest and non forest produce in ways that are in harmony with the nature.

He also laid emphasis on establishing forest/tribal haats for providing the marketing platforms to SHGs/young entrepreneurs for selling their products.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed schemes like AVSAR, Rise Together, Tourist Village Network, Parvaaz etc. under Mission Youth.

TRANSFORMING JAMMU AND KASHMIR



JKIP-2021-30 TO TRANSFORM J&K FROM 'ASPIRATIONAL' TO 'INDUSTRIALLY ADVANCED' REGION



Srinagar: The hallmark of any developed region is the fine balance between manufacturing, services and agriculture sectors. The industrial landscape of the UT of J&K is dominated by MSME as it contributes about 8% to the GSDP and employs the largest number of people in services and manufacturing sectors.

Around 25000 MSMEs are operational in the UT employing around 90% of the industrial workforce.

In this backdrop, the Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Policy (JKIP)-2021-30 is a welcome change over the previous industrial policies. Combined with the incentives offered under “New Central Scheme for Industrial Development of Jammu and Kashmir” notified by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India, in 2021, the industrial ecosystem in J&K is set to witness a paradigm shift.

The new policy is different from the industrial policies that were in operation prior to this policy. The dispensations of the erstwhile J-K state had adopted industrial policies from time to time (i.e. 1995, 1998 & 2004) the latest being Industrial Policy, 2016. To support the old industrial policies, the Indian government sanctioned packages of incentives for the industrial development of the erstwhile state at different intervals namely Central Capital Investment Scheme, 2002, 2012; Scheme of Budgetary Support under Goods and Services Tax regime and JKIDS 2018 but the industrial sector in Kashmir failed to compete with other parts of the country.

According to the new industrial policy, which has come into effect on April 1, all industrial units coming into commercial production as well as the existing units undertaking substantial expansion, shall be entitled for incentives under this policy.

The new policy has a spending outlay of Rs 28,400 crore (Rs 284 billion), the largest incentive to date, on the industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir for the next 15 years. It is expected to generate an investment of Rs 20,000 crore (Rs 200 billion) and employment of 4.5 lakh over the plan period.

This is the first block-level development project that intends to undertake the process of industrialisation at the very grassroots level using the local resources, skill, and talent available domestically.

The policy specifically promises an era of socio-economic development in the region, catering to the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The policy has been aimed to prioritise the aspirations of the entrepreneurs while putting in concerted efforts for making Jammu and Kashmir the most investor-friendly union territory. It also encourages and facilitates people who want to join

the wagon of the industrial sector in Jammu and Kashmir.

The policy specifically promises an era of socio-economic development in the region, catering to the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. This shift is directed towards ensuring the transformation of J&K from an ‘aspirational’ to an ‘industrially advanced’ region. The policy aims at driving industrial growth in an environment of stability wherein dynamic competition is allowed for the betterment of traditional core sectors such as Agriculture and allied sectors, food processing, tourism, health, pharmaceuticals etc.

To promote Ease of Doing Business in J&K, the ‘Single-Window approach’ of the New Industrial Policy is envisaged to streamline the government’s role as a ‘facilitator, partner, provider, collaborator and promoter’. With conducive ease of doing business, setting up of Land Bank and handholding of MSMEs, J&K is all set to position itself as a lucrative investment destination in India over next 10 years.

The new policy also outlines various themes of intervention in the domain of training in ITIs, industry and university collaboration and to encourage investment in capacity building by providing adequate financial support. The proposed Entrepreneur and Skill Development Fund shall prove to be a game-changer. The policy aims at “minimum regulation and maximum facilitation” keeping in mind the unique geographical location and environmental dynamics of UT.

Environment Protection forms the bed-rock of the new policy and thus in consonance with the idea of “sustainable development”. The new policy aims at promotion of new industries in the UT of J&K in fields of IT, Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture and Food Processing, Education and Skill Development etc. At the same time, it also sets a holistic plan for revival of sick units with adequate regulatory support and financial incentives. “Zero Effect- Zero Defect” productivity is very much achievable in light of the new industrial policy.

In brief it is evident that the potential of new industrial policy in terms of job creation, promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship, balanced development of all the regions of J&K and improving the quality of life is all set to be realised with the cluster-based approach and optimum realisation of resources.

‘Tradition, Growth and Transformation’ - the slogan of new industrial policy is all set to herald a new era of growth and prosperity for the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

Dairy sector helping realize PM's dream of doubling farmers' income by 2022

Srinagar: With an aim to double farmers' income by 2022 while also focusing on improving the socio-economic condition of people, the government is working on several schemes on dairy development in Jammu and Kashmir to lift the rural economy and improve livelihoods.

Being an agrarian region, the agriculture sector contributes 16.18% to J&K's GDP, of which 35% is contributed by the Dairy Sector.

Dairy is one of the most important sectors and the vast population living in rural areas relies on dairy and livestock for their livelihood. Therefore, improving the position of the dairy sector in J&K is directly proportional to improving the socio-economic condition of people.

Since the launch of 'Operation Flood' in 1970 which transformed India from a milk-deficient nation into the world's largest milk producer, White Revolution is gaining momentum in the whole of the country and J&K is also marching on the path.

Hand Holding for Small Scale Dairy Farming

Majority of the dairy producers in J&K are small holders having 2-3 animals, while the UT is producing 70 lakh litres of milk per day.

To increase production, the production government has started several schemes like dairy entrepreneurship development scheme (DEDS) which focuses on setting up small dairy farms. And in this scheme 15000 dairy units of two cows each will be distributed as a special package for Jammu and Kashmir. Government is also working on cooperatives, as it helps to make milk production profitable with Jammu and Kashmir milk producers cooperative limited (JKMPCL) is also working to raise the capacity from 50,000 LPD of milk production to 3 lakh LPD.

Integrated dairy development scheme (IDDS) is another scheme which not only focuses on providing financial assistance, but also supporting the dairy producer by providing milking machine, bulk milk cooling unit at 50% subsidy, paneer making machine, khoya making, dahi making, cream separator, ice cream making machine, butter and ghee making machine, milk van, milk ATM and DG Set.

Other Schemes

Several central government schemes are also being implemented like National livestock mission, Livestock health and disease control, Rashtriya Gokul mission (RGM), Kisan credit card (KCC) to livestock farmers, National program for dairy development etc.

First Milk Village

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has declared Jerri settlement in Reasi district as the first 'milk village' of the Union Territory and sanctioned 57 more dairy farms under integrated dairy development scheme (IDDS) for the hamlet.

Apart from several schemes, the government is looking at various interventions like genetic up-gradation of cattle, cattle induction,



fodder development, milk procurement and processing and health coverage and risk management.

The UT administration under the vibrant leadership of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha is working tirelessly to improve the conditions of farmers and increase their income and fulfil the dream of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to double the income of farmers by 2022.

Scripting Success Stories

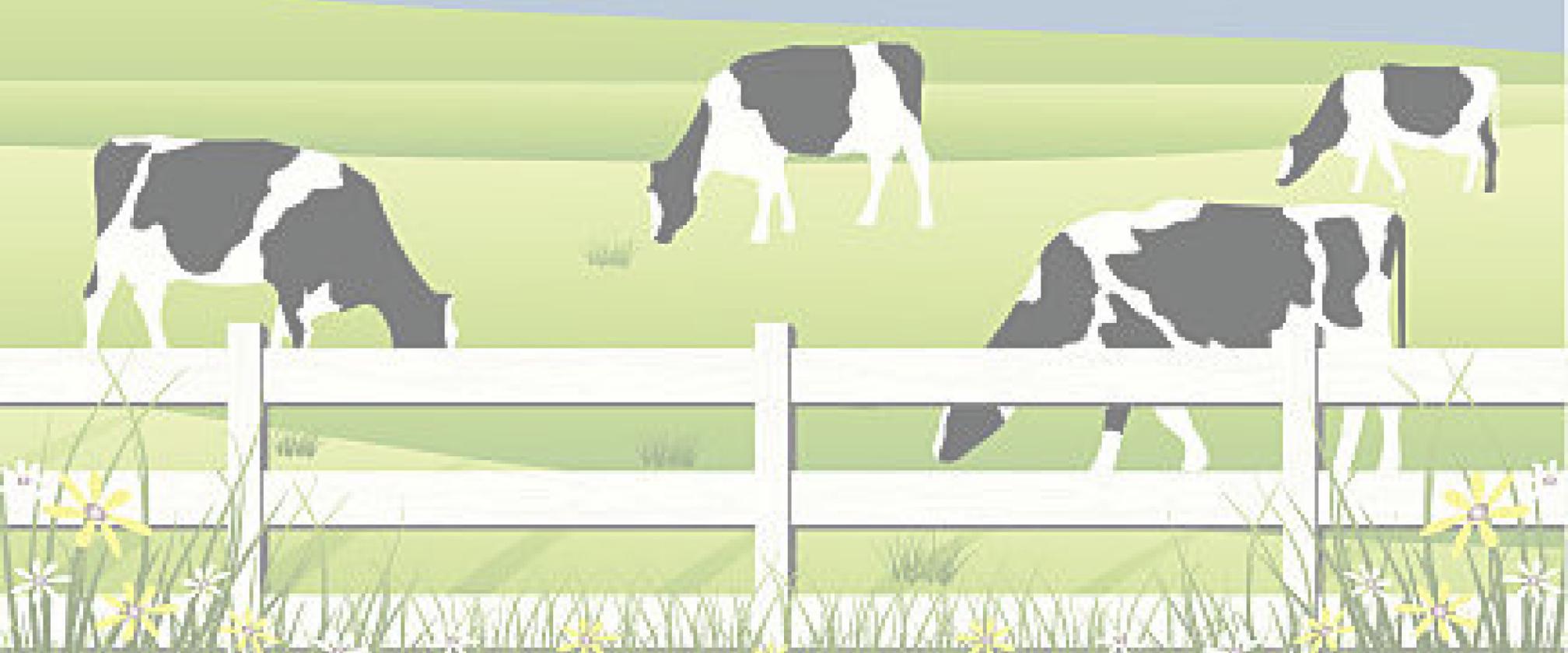
Manzoor Ahmad from Ramban district of Jammu division shifted from running a dry fruit shop to dairy business. Ahmad sells around 200 litres of milk per day. His dream of becoming an entrepreneur was fulfilled with guidance from the Animal Husbandry Department, Ramban.

The department offered him guidance on scientific lines to manage his dairy farm. Starting with four cows at his dairy farm in Bankoot, Banihal but with the help of Animal Husbandry Department the number has now reached to 20 cows for his farm under the Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS).

Hailing from a family with an agricultural background, there has been no looking back for Asiya Bashir who at the very beginning had the idea of becoming an entrepreneur, supporting her family financially.

In the southern district of Kashmir Shopian, Asiya set up a dairy farm under Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS) of the department.

A resident of village Chiraath, Shopian, Asiya is successfully running her farm with 12 cows, of which six cows are giving milk and, according to her, is able to sell 90 to 100 liters per day through Jammu and Kashmir Milk Producers Cooperative Limited.



Several interventions being taken to promote tourism in J&K

Srinagar: The year 2021 witnessed a large footfall of tourists; both national as well as international due to numerous positive and constructive interventions of the Central Government in consonance with the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

Several remarkable initiatives were undertaken across the length and breadth of the Union Territory to rejuvenate the dwindling economic landscape which was affected due to the relentless wrath of Covid-19.

In one such major intervention for upliftment of the tourism sector in J&K, the Union government made a record budget allocation of 786 crores in budget for the tourism sector here which is 509 crores higher than last budgetary allocation with an intent to boost tourism and allied services of Jammu and Kashmir.

In commensurate with this, the government of J&K has also undertaken several initiatives to give further stimulus and impetus to the tourism sector here.

In a mega push to promote ecotourism in Jammu and Kashmir, the government has approved development of seven new trekking routes in various wildlife protected areas. The decision will also allow online booking of 29 forest rest houses and inspection huts in Kashmir and Jammu divisions, under a common brand and logo.

The first night flight started operating from Srinagar Airport on March 18, 2021, marking the dawn of a new era and indicating improvement in air connectivity to Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of the country.

Lieutenant Governor of J&K, Manoj Sinha also launched a golf training Academy at Kashmir Golf Course in July 2021 to promote and strengthen sports ecosystem in the union territory. This is a giant step forward for restoring the historic golf course after 2014 floods.

A four day JK open golf tournament was also organized in Kashmir on 15th September 2021 to attract large numbers of golf lovers and to make Jammu and Kashmir the golfing capital of the world.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has picked Srinagar among 49 cities as part of the creative city network under the Crafts and Folk arts category. This inclusion is likely to pave the way for the city to represent its handicrafts on the global stage through UNESCO. It is a major recognition for Jammu and Kashmir on a global platform.

Worth to mention, Jammu and Kashmir recorded the highest tourist footfall in the last 7 years. Tourist foot fall crossed 6.65 lakh in 2021 compared to 4.1 lakh in 2020. 1.27 lakh tourists were recorded in November which is highest from the past decade.

Under the smart city project, 20 religious sites in Srinagar were earmarked for face lifting and renovation to attract a larger number of tourists. The focus area is the induction of modern technology to uplift the overall infrastructural standard of the city.

The ministry of tourism also organized a mega tourism promotion event in Srinagar "Tapping the potential of Kashmir: Another Day in Paradise" from 11-13 April 2021. The objective of the event was to showcase the myriad tourism products of the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir as the destination for leisure, adventure, Eco, wedding, films and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions) Tourism.

Government of Jammu and Kashmir in collaboration with Archaeological Survey of India undertook the task of renovation, restoration and conservation work on Mubarak Mandi heritage complex, Amar Singh Palace and twin sections of cable car project in Jammu to boost tourism potential of Jammu city.

Recently, Chief Secretary of J&K, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta announced the promotion of 75 new tourist destinations through a dedicated 3-month tourism festival.

In a bid to ramp up infrastructure and boost tourism in Anantnag district of South Kashmir, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has started building infrastructure under the prime minister development project at a cost of 3.5 crores.

In one of the remarkable initiatives launched by the government of J&K, Lieutenant Governor of J&K, Manoj Sinha launched the Jammu And Kashmir Tourist village Network under the mission



youth to boost rural tourism. The aim of the initiative is to transform 75 villages of known historical, picturesque, beauty and cultural significance into tourist villages. Another aim is to promote youth-led sustainable tourism, community entrepreneurship and to empower women and youth by offering direct and indirect employment opportunities. All this will help in taking a long step to boost the rural economy.

A provision for multitude of benefits has been there in J&K tourist village network scheme like Rs 10 lakh for infrastructure, camping material and equipment, home stays etc. Upto Rs 10 lakh for shooting any film or songs by empaneled companies, and upto Rs 2 lakh to local groups for shooting songs etc.

The Jammu and Kashmir government launched a new film policy to boost tourism and investment in the union territory. The policy envisaged the setting up of Jammu and Kashmir Film Development Council (JKFDC).

Moreover, river festivals on the lines of ganga festival, were organized in December to create awareness among the general public regarding cleanliness and preservation of rivers in Jammu and Kashmir.

In December 2021, the administration organized a safari tour in Srinagar's Eidgah area to boost Kashmir art and promote artisans with ramifications on the tourism industry of Kashmir as well.

For better management of pilgrims at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, online booking has been made mandatory to visit for darshan. Crowd management measures like using radio waves based RFID tracking systems to track the location of passengers have also been started at the shrine. Ropeways will also be built for children and elderly, while skywalks and suspension bridges will be built for crowd management around the area.

With the implementation of 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment acts in union territory of Jammu and Kashmir regarding local self government and with the resultant devolution of financial powers to the panchayats at the three tiers, mobilization of resources in the form district capex plans has resulted in accelerating the pace of infrastructure development at the block and panchayat level. Tourist huts, viewpoints, community sheds and various other useful structures have been developed to further push tourism in the union territory. Plan allocation of district plans for all 20 districts of union territory has been more than doubled from 5136 crore in 2020-21 to 12600 crore in 2021-22.

Further at the global fora, on the sidelines of Expo2020 at Dubai, Jammu and Kashmir tourism organized an outreach meet with the stakeholders of the Middle East and adjoining areas. The event was part of a series by J&K tourism to promote tourism potential and varied tourism products of the union territory. The aim has been to attract tourists from the Middle East to explore the natural beauty, cuisine, art, culture and other products offered by J&K.

In brief, the constant interventions initiated by both the central and UT government are surely transforming J&K into one of the ideal tourist destination across the globe.

Govt accelerates installation of renewable power generation plants across J&K

Srinagar: As solar energy is emerging as the new source for meeting the energy requirements of the world, India's increasing efforts to expand the share of renewable energy has led to a substantial increase in the solar power generation in the past few years.

The country has set an ambitious target of installing 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by the year 2022, which includes 100 GW from solar, 60 GW from wind, 10 GW from bio-power and 5 GW from small hydro-power. The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has taken into note the country's ambition to reach 175 GW by 2022 and has accelerated the progress of installing renewable power generation plants.

As per the reports of the Ministry of Renewable energy, a total of 5063.10 MW of renewable energy capacity has been added during the year 2019-20, taking the cumulative installed RE capacity to 83.38 GW as of October 2019. This includes 37.09 GW of Wind, 31.70 GW of solar, 9.94 GW of Bio-power and 4.65 GW of Small Hydro Power. Further, projects of 30.06 GW capacity are at various stages of implementation and 39.67 GW capacity are under various stages of bidding. Clean energy projects now account for more than a fifth of India's installed power generation capacity.

The extended benefits of the Renewable energy sources are that they can be used to produce electricity with fewer environmental impacts. Generation of power from conventional sources is also the source of greenhouse emission attributing to global warming and has adverse impact on the climate. Therefore, a global shift towards sustainable renewable energy generation is being witnessed.

Jammu & Kashmir has an enormous potential for solar energy. Setting up renewable energy capacity would help to bridge a part of its power requirement. Thus, it further necessitates the use of renewable sources of energy to bridge the deficit gap.

As the challenges of climate change and global warming continuously threaten the world community, the Jammu & Kashmir government has also recognized the urgent need to tackle these challenges. To create a conducive environment and develop an excellent business ecosystem for harnessing maximum potential of solar energy through Government, Private Enterprises, Public-Private Partnerships and individual efforts, government envisions a

future with reduced dependence on fossil fuel by promoting renewable energy sources.

The J&K Government recognizes that renewable energy can also significantly increase J&K's and the Nation's energy security. J&K also aim to evolve new technologies in renewable energy generation and its application through participation of farmers, industries and public at large to boost local economy. Provision of tie up with local enterprises as Joint Venture/ SPV for the investment would give a boost to local enterprises and also offers backward linkages to the industries who are investing lesser amounts.

Solar power projects can be setup in a much shorter time-frame when compared to conventional power projects and the cost of solar power has become more economical today. Solar power can also help meet energy requirements for both grids connected as well as off-grid applications such as solar powered agricultural pump sets.

J&K is richly endowed with natural renewable resources for generating electricity. It has multiple microclimatic some locations like Udampur lie under sub-tropical climate. In addition, the plains of the J&K like Jammu, Akhnoor, Samba and Kathua lie in the composite climatic zone. The entire J&K receives a good amount of Global Horizontal Irradiance (GHI) which varies from 4.97 to 5.17 kWh/m²/day.

In order to promote this new source of energy, the J&K Government has started the scheme of providing Rooftop Solar Photovoltaic Plant on subsidised rates. This scheme is being implemented by the Jammu & Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) of the Department of Science & Technology.

Under this scheme, 40% subsidy is being provided to consumers for installing Solar Photovoltaic rooftops. The solar rooftops are available from 1 KW to 10 KW capacity and five years free maintenance is also provided to the consumers.

Though Jammu and Kashmir has vast potential of generating Hydroelectricity with several massive projects going on which will make the UT power surplus region in coming years, the J&K is also making remarkable strides for generating energy requirements through renewable resources.

Govt promoting agriprenurship as a means of high return

JAMMU: Agriculture is a key and essential part of human civilization and forms the core societal development of any region.

The Jammu and Kashmir economy is predominantly agriculture dependent and nearly 70% of the population is directly or indirectly engaged in agricultural and allied activities.

The J&K government works on a vision on a daily basis to look beyond subsistence agriculture by leveraging special agro-climatic conditions of the Union Territory for securing high returns to the farmers from transformed and modern sustainable and inclusive agriculture interventions. Also with the introduction of innovative and globally validated farm technologies, raising of the requisite state of the art infrastructure and creation of an enabling ecosystem, agriculture sector is being developed on modern lines across length and breadth of J&K.

The mission of J&K Administration is to secure a complete transformation in the lives and outlook of the farmers of the UT from subsistence to modern, vibrant and high return agriculture by the end of year 2023. The objective of government is also to dispel the image of agriculture as a means of sustenance and to promote in a big way agriprenurship as a means of high return and respectable employment. They are also making maximum effort for aggregating Farmers Interest Groups (FIGs) particularly youth and women and Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) in product specific clusters to meet the objectives of Atamnirbhar Bharat and making the most of funding and opportunities available under various CSS for securing the welfare of farmers of the Union Territory.

In recent years, mechanization of the farming sector is an important step to transform the agriculture sector which will help farmers to produce more. As a part of agricultural mechanization support to the farmers for broader economic transformation, Lieutenant Governor of J&K handed over sanction letters for 100 tractors to the farmers and 1035 threshers for panchayats. The government is also setting up Custom Hiring centres and Farm Machinery Banks in different parts of the union territory. As many as 151 custom hiring centres and 122 farm machinery banks have been started so far.

Agriculture sector and Horticulture sector are key drivers of J&Ks economic growth and efficient use of seed technologies, high-density plantation, nutrient management and widespread adoption of integrated dairy farming schemes to make Jammu-Kashmir agriculture powerhouse. Facilities have been provided like cold-storage, market linkages and food-processing units, besides developing a strong framework for farmer industry connect and generating employment opportunities for rural youth to bridge the rural-urban divide.

Moreover till recent months, direct financial assistance has been provided to 11.7 lakh farmers through the Kissan Credit Card and incentives worth Rs. 1,706 crore have been disbursed to more than a million beneficiaries under the PM-KISAN scheme.

Extending Technology benefits to farmers, the government distributed Paddy/Maize threshers to 3000 Panchayats which will be distributed to all Panchayats soon.

Also, 1.29 lakh soil samples being tested during the current year, 56,426 soil health cards (SHCs) have been distributed besides more than 1 lakh quintals of quality seed has also been distributed among farmers to amplify the production and make them economically sustainable. The government has also launched several other remarkable initia-

tives to develop the agricultural sector of J&K.

Under the National Saffron Mission, irrigation infrastructure including a sprinkler system has been started which is connected to 126 deep production wells. As a result of this, around 2578.75 hectares of land stands rejuvenated till date. The implementation of the Mission has also ensured substantial increase in the crop yields from 1.88 kg/Ha to 4.5 kg/Ha which in turn has ultimately doubled the income of saffron growers.

The government has also started several marketing initiatives to make the agricultural sector of J&K more viable. G.I. tagging for Saffron and Guchi (Wild Mushroom) of Doda has given remarkable strides to acclaimed Saffron of Kashmir in international markets as well to the Guchi Mushroom.

Moreover, organic Certification of Basmati Rice of R.S. Pura has also increased the marketing value for the rice.

Similarly, other remarkable achievements like Lal Mirch harvested on 1182 Ha, Sweet Corn harvested on 160 Ha(6105 Qtl), Exotic vegetable has been harvested over 125 Ha and others have generated massive returns for the farmers.

In a bid to give a major boost to the agriculture sector in Jammu and Kashmir, the UT government signed a pact with New Zealand for the transformation of the sheep farming sector in the Union Territory. The overarching objective of the pact is to improve farmer's remuneration, transfer of technology in research and development as well marketing and value addition of sheep products of Jammu-Kashmir.

Online registration certification has also started in Jammu and Kashmir to facilitate registration and ensure growth in organic farming. For the first time in history, 2000 trucks of vegetables have been exported from Jammu and Kashmir to other parts of the country. Jammu and Kashmir has achieved top position in the entire country with a yield of 70 quintals per hectare of paddy.

Moreover, 60,000 hectares of basmati agriculture land is being converted into high productivity land. In the last one year, a record 5400 metric tonnes of mushroom and 22,182 quintals of honey has been produced. Kisan Credit Cards have been made available to more than 11 lakh 60 thousand farmers.

To give more boost to the Agriculture sector here, Agriculture department has also decided to collaborate with Amazon Fresh which has evinced a keen interest in Fruit & Vegetable assortment available in Jammu with the motive of expanding its network in North India. Jammu is also going to have a collection/procurement centre next year. To provide a market for Kashmiri Saffron, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) has decided that it will sell Kashmiri Saffron at all its outlets across the country, thereby providing another option to the farmers to sell their produce at attractive prices.

Apart from saffron, Jammu and Kashmir is number one in the whole country in the production of apple, walnut and almond and the upcoming industries in the food processing sector will help farmers' income to grow manifold in the coming days.

As the agriculture sector is the driving force of J&Ks economy, the reforms brought by the J&K government in the recent months for the development and progression of agriculture sector are yielding encouraging results.



Mission Youth acting as a conduit for aspirations and concerns of youth

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Government launched a ground-breaking initiative of Mission Youth with the objective to act as a conduit for aspirations and concerns of youth of J&K.

The mission is intended to provide a platform for unparalleled transformation of the youth into ambassadors of hope, peace and socio-economic growth through systematic interventions across various domains.

The mission lays emphasis on all individuals between the age group of 15 to 25 years with twin related aims: to effectively support and encourage young individuals in fulfilling their potential and aspirations while addressing their needs and concerns and to efficiently endorse young people to shape their future as per their aspirations.

The programme was conceived with the objective to positively engage youth of J&K through multi-pronged strategy involving all necessary systematic interventions.

Thus the organization envisions inducing a sieve of demand driven interventions for inclusive development of youth which includes provision of livelihood generation, skill development, education, counselling & rehabilitation, sports and recreation etc.

For holistic and pragmatic youth engagement and empowerment in J&K on sustainable lines, Mission Youth envisions setting-up of specially tailored youth centres with the state-of-the-art architecture in all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir, primarily designed to present a safe youth-appealing environment with manifestation of hope, security and aspirations of the youth.

MUMKIN Scheme: Under the umbrella of Mission Youth, the Mumkin Scheme is one of the prominent schemes of the J&K government with the aim to facilitate the youth of Jammu and Kashmir to establish a sustainable livelihood in the transport sector by providing financial assistance for acquisition of new small commercial vehicles.

The applicant has a full liberty to choose any small commercial vehicle of any approved models/makes of his/her choice. The small commercial vehicles include taxis, mini-buses, light commercial vehicles, tempo and any other mode of transportation of similar nature under public carrier permit. The scheme is being implemented by Mission Youth, J&K through district level committees constituted for the purpose.

The scheme banking partner shall extend the loan facility to the extent of 100% of the on-road price of the vehicle to be purchased under the scheme. Mission Youth shall provide an amount of Rs 80000 or 10% of On-road price of the vehicle as upfront subsidy towards the loan amount of the beneficiary under the scheme.

The vehicle manufacturer shall also provide an upfront special discount, not less than the amount of subsidy provided by Mission Youth towards the loan account of the beneficiary.

TEJASWINI (THE RADIANT) is another scheme to empower and inspire women for income generation for activities either in manufacturing, service, trading, small business etc. Its core focus is to facilitate soft finance for setting up new units/enterprises or for expansion/modernization of existing units or for acquisition of fixed assets (Plant and machinery, equipment, furniture & fixtures).

Under the scheme, the eligible potential female entrepreneurs are facilitated to avail financial assistance under Mudra Loan from J&K bank to the extent of 5 lakh.

The scheme banking partners extend

a loan facility to the extent of 100% of the project cost under the scheme where Mission youth provides an amount of Rs 50000 or 10% of the project cost under the scheme.

The activities covered under Tejaswini are canteen and restraint, creche, cyber café, beauty parlour, day care centre, laundry & dry cleaning, mobile repairing, photocopying centre, training institute, fitness centre, yoga centre or any other profitable activity.

To support the masses, the new government livelihood schemes aim to provide easy loans and subsidies to unemployed youth interested in doing any start-up business. The fundamental of Mission Youth is to give opportunities to unemployed youth by enabling them to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities, resulting in appreciable improvement in their livelihoods on a sustainable basis, through building strong grassroots institutions for the youth.

In seeking to realize this vision for the future of young people of J&K, the following overarching values are the guiding force behind all actions of Mission Youth: Respect, Recognition, Sustained support and solidarity. While as the principles of Mission Youth for releasing the values include Responsiveness, Access, Participation, Inclusion, Diversity, Empowerment and Equality.

Youth Clubs:

The Mission Youth empowers youth as important stakeholder in Participatory Good Governance and in this regard 4239 Youth Clubs were constituted on Mission Mode across J&K to mark International Youth Day 2021.

These youth clubs are engaging volunteers, who will get an opportunity to work through real challenges and make meaningful change in the society.

The opening up of youth clubs is another golden chapter in J&K's history with the creation of the 4239 Youth Clubs under Mission Youth in a record time, the J&K Government had taken a firm step towards making the Youth a partner in the Governance process and UT's development.

Youth Data Bank and Interactive Digital Platform:

The initiative is intended to address shortcomings of official statistics regarding youth of J&K. The initiative will result in the creation of a repository of consistent and reliable youth statistics required for short and long-term planning and implementation of youth engagement and empowerment programmes.

The initiative will also facilitate establishing direct communication linkages with the youth for greater engagement. The major activities to be taken under this initiative are detailed as under.

To develop a target-specific database of young population; to capture about 75 critical contours of young population ranging from demographics to psychi-social interactions; to effective mechanism for information dissemination; to provide all youth related services through digital platform; promote concept of "Digital India"; to design area, gender, age specific engagement programmes for youth; formation of youth groups for perennial updation of dates and registration of Young Achievers as Youth Icons.

Tourist Village Network Programme:

Besides these programmes, the J&K administration led by the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha had launched 'Tourist Village Network' under Mission Youth to provide further impetus to the tourism industry.

Under the initiative, over 75 villages in the UT would promote tourism and provide sustainable employment for the local youth from these areas.

The initiative is aimed at transforming 75 villages of Jammu and Kashmir known for historical, picturesque beauty and cultural significance into tourist villages.

The youth-led sustainable tourism initiative will strengthen the rural economy & community entrepreneurship, empower youth & women by providing direct and indirect employment opportunities.

Northern Railways makes breakthrough in ambitious Kashmir project

Banihal/Jammu: The Northern Railways has achieved a line and level breakthrough of the longest 12.758 km tunnel between Sumer and Arpinchala station on the Katra-Banihal section under the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project.

The breakthrough was achieved on the T-49 tunnel, which is going to be the longest tunnel of the Indian Railways surpassing the 11.2 km-long Pir Panjal tunnel constructed by USBRL on the Banihal-Qazigund section.

The South portal of tunnel T-49 is located in the picturesque Sumer village at a distance of 45 km from district headquarters Ramban at an altitude of 1,200 metres, while the North portal is located near Arpinchala village in Khari Tehsil at an altitude of 1,600 metres.

He said the T-49 tunnel has two tubes — one is the main tunnel and the other is the escape tunnel. It has been constructed using a modern drill and blast technique called the New Austrian Tunnelling Method.

He said the cross-section profile of the tunnel is modified to give it a horseshoe shape.

In order to facilitate construction of the longest tunnel, three adits — Urnihal Adit, Hingni Adit and Kundan Adit — have also been constructed. The tunnel has a ruling gradient 1 in 80 and a designed speed of 100 Kmph.

An adit is a horizontal or near-horizontal passageway to a larger underground excavation for the purposes of ventilation, water removal, or auxiliary entrance.



As per the international standards, he said, the escape tunnel constructed parallel to the main tunnel is connected by cross passages at an interval of 375 metres to facilitate rescue and restoration work.

The work of construction was entrusted by Northern Railways to M/s IRCON International limited which has assigned works in two packages to M/S HCC and M/s AFCONS..

The HCC is executing the work on the 5.1 km stretch length from the south portal and AFCONS is executing the work on the 7.658 km stretch from the north portal.

Several challenges were encountered in the course of construction such as shear zone, perched aquifer, and highly jointed rock mass, rock problems of squeezing and high ingress of water.

During construction activities of the

tunnel, the local population was employed by agencies for various works, which has changed the overall socio-economic landscape.

Of the proposed 272-km-long USBRL project, 161 km has already been commissioned and operationalised in phases, with the first phase of the 118-km Qazigund-Baramulla section commissioned in October 2009, followed by 18 km Banihal-Qazigund in June 2013 and 25 km Udhampur-Katra in July 2014.

The work on the intervening stretch of 111 km between Katra and Banihal is under progress, and the Katra-Banihal section is traversing through the hilly terrain of the lower Himalayas, where geology is a major challenge.

It has several major bridges. Long tunnels are under different stages of construction.



JKSRLM, a poverty alleviation project, promoting self- employment



Srinagar: National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), a poverty alleviation project implemented by Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India is focusing on promoting self-employment and organization of rural people especially poor. The basic idea behind this program is to organize the poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and make them capable for self-employment.

In Jammu and Kashmir this programme is being operated as the Jammu-Kashmir State Rural livelihood Mission (JKSRLM).

The SRLM aims to reduce poverty in the J&K by building strong grassroots level institutions of the poor, engage them into gainful livelihood interventions and ensure appreciable improvement in their income on a sustainable basis. This programme also aims to enable poor to think positively about himself and his family and reap all the benefits of government schemes which ultimately helps him to live a life full of contentment, happiness, and dignity.

JKSRLM's mandate is to reach out to 66% of the rural population across the 125 blocks of Jammu and Kashmir and to provide them sustainable livelihood opportunities and nurture them so that they come out of poverty and appreciate a honourable quality of life. The core values which guide all the activities under JKSRLM are inclusion of the poorest and substantial role of the poorest in all the process, transparency and accountability of all processes and institutions, proprietorship and key role of the poor and their institutions in all the stages – planning, implementation and monitoring and lastly community self-reliance and self-dependence.

In J&K, there are number of projects running under JKSRLM in which Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) and Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) are making remarkable progress.

MKSP is a sub-component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-NRLM (DAY-NRLM), with an aim to empower women in agriculture. Its objective is to strength-

en small agriculturists through promotion of sustainable agriculture practices like Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CSMA), Non-Pesticide Management (NPM), Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF), Pashu-Sakhi Model for doorstep Animal Care Services and Sustainable Regeneration and Harvesting of Non-Timber Forest Produce.

Additionally, the focus of MKSP is on capacitating the smallholders to adopt sustainable climate change resilient agro-ecology, eventually creating a pool of skilled community professionals.

Under CMSA of MKSP a pilot project was initiated in two blocks, Chenani and Bishnah in which 1200 Mahila Kisans were Involved 1060 Mahila Kisans were registered on PGS portal.

Under Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP), another sub-scheme under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) has the objective of assisting rural households including women to set-up enterprises that aid them in their financial upliftment.

Moreover, building support is provided to all the entrepreneurs backed under Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme through Community Resource Persons for Enterprise Promotion (CRPEP).

JKSRLM (Umeed) under (DAY-NRLM) has a vision for reaching out to approximately 9 lakhs rural women. Most of the households in rural areas are engaged in agriculture, livestock activity and NTFP as their primary source of income. DAY-NRLM being a livelihoods promotion program will support each family with multiple livelihoods. MKSP would engage with these poor households and help them to adopt sustainable practices in agriculture, livestock practices and NTFP making them viable livelihoods for the poor households.

The J&K Government has made remarkable achievements under SRLM and has provided training as well as financial support to various SHGs and made them self sufficient.

Through the SRLM programme

of J&K Government, Smt. Pammi Devi along with other SHG members from Block Bishnah, undertook a 30 Days long training and acquired the skills of making Jams, Pickles, sauces, chutneys and concentrates. The training was a part of JKRLM's vision of making the rural women self-reliant and thus enabling them to start a lucrative livelihood for themselves. Seeing her zest for making her life meaningful and becoming an earning hand for her family, the Mission motivated and facilitated her to start a food processing and preservation unit in Rehal in convergence with the Department of Horticulture.

Similarly, Chinta Devi, a Self Help Group member of Sai Ram group living in remote Village Beaulian of Block Pouni, District Reasi is a happy fish farmer who is earning a respectable livelihood out of fish farming. She received assistance from JKSRLM, established the fish farming unit and is currently earning handsomely which improved the economic condition of her family.

Moreover, through JKSRLM, Cultivation of Medicinal Plants and installation of Distillation Unit in Panchari Block of District Udhampur has been initiated in convergence with Integrative Institute of Indian Medicines (IIM), Jammu. The institute distributed Marigold medicinal plants free of Cost under IIM Aroma Mission among 150 SHG members/Farmers to start their farm livelihood activities. The cultivation has started and till date 472.5 Kgs. of Medicinal Plant seeds have been sold to IIM, Jammu. The institute also installed a distillation unit for the extraction of Oil from Aroma seeds/crop.

In brief, SRLM is emerging as the hope for rural women as the programme has brought self sufficiency among them. The women have not only come out of poverty but their status has also been raised within their own families by this mission. The mission is extensively based on capacity building and strengthening of community based institutions by empowering rural women at different levels.

J&KHCIP TO ATTRACT GLOBAL INVESTMENTS IN HEALTH SECTOR, PROMOTE MEDICAL TOURISM



Srinagar: Policy and planning decisions have powerful implications for individual behaviours and public health. The prevention of today's major health problems requires understanding and intervention to affect the root causes of ill health and the policies that shape and affect the root causes.

In Jammu and Kashmir, to address these problems effectively, the administration has taken several measures proactively to provide best health care services to its people.

One of the major decision in that direction was the introduction of "J&K Health Care Investment Policy (HCIP)" aimed at promoting private parties and entrepreneurs to set up healthcare infrastructure in the state. This Healthcare Investment Policy aims to realize the UT's obligation of providing quality and effective healthcare to its citizens and to take healthcare service to the door steps of the masses so as to ensure availability of the complete gamut of healthcare services in the primary, secondary and tertiary care sectors to the people of the UT.

Healthcare sector in Jammu and Kashmir has shown significant progress in terms of improvement in infrastructure, manpower and health system, which is now reflected in improved healthcare indicators of the UT that have become comparatively better than those in many other states and even better than the national average, as per NFHS indicators. Despite the COVID situation, the health and medical sector took a lead in Jammu and Kashmir to attract global investment into health care.

In J&K, where the private sector is still in infancy and almost 80% of the healthcare facilities are being provided by the public sector, the overcrowding of the government health institutions has led to compromise in the quality of care. In government institutions, out of pocket expenditure is quite substantial as the patients have to purchase the medicines and other essential items from the market. This entails a huge burden on poor households. This policy will cover all these aspects and provide major relief to the locals

here.

The Healthcare investment policy is expected to improve accessibility of quality healthcare services to the people, promote establishment of hospital, medical and allied educational infrastructure and establish the state as a destination of choice for private healthcare service providers, besides promoting medical tourism. J&K Government is taking several reformative measures for the advancement and upgradation of health infrastructure, besides providing affordable healthcare services to all.

In J&K, special attention is being paid to three areas – Prevention, Better Treatment and Care. Seven new medical colleges, two AIIMS, nearly 1000 healthcare and wellness centres, five new nursing colleges, B.Sc. paramedical course as well as more than 100% increase in medical seats are contributing towards the development and advancement of the healthcare sector in the UT. The focus of the government is not only creation of the best of the best private hospitals in Jammu and Srinagar but also smaller ones in districts and health resorts to boost health and wellness tourism as J&K is natural destination of the world.

The salient features of the health care investment policy include 30 per cent subsidy on capital investment to be provided for setting up of multi-speciality and super-speciality hospitals, medical, nursing and paramedical colleges. Other salient features of the policy include interest subsidy at a rate of 5 per cent per annum on term loan subject to a ceiling of Rs 15 lakh per year for a period of five years from the date of operationalisation of the project and subsidised power tariff rates as applicable to the industries sector.

Overall, this policy is one of the remarkable initiatives of J&K government and aims to realize the UT's obligation of providing quality and effective healthcare to its citizens and to take healthcare service to the doorsteps of the masses to ensure availability of the complete gamut of healthcare services in the primary, secondary and tertiary care sectors to the people of the UT.

JJM: 10.50 LAKH HOUSEHOLDS PROVIDED FHTCS IN J&K

'All households to be covered by Aug 2022; Srinagar, Ganderbal achieve 100% coverage'

Srinagar: On 15th of August, 2019, from the ramparts of the Red Fort, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi announced Government of India's ambitious project 'JAL JEEVAN MISSION (JJM)' to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual functional household tap connections (FHTCs) by 2024 to all households in rural India.

The programme will cater to other aspects of water scenario of the country like recharge and reuse through grey water management, water conservation and rainwater harvesting. The mission will be based on a community approach and will include extensive Information, Education and Communication as a key component of the mission.

As far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, the UT has made remarkable progress under this mission. The J&K Administration has set a target to cover all the 20 districts of the UT by September 2022 under this ambitious mission. As per the data available on the dashboard of JJM, out of total 18.35 lakh households, about 5.75 lakh households have functional tap water connections.

Now after two years of hard work, a total of 10.50 lakh (57.2%) households have tap water connections as J&K has provided 4.67 lakh new tap water connections in the last two years. Two districts namely Srinagar and Ganderbal which include 11 blocks, 383 panchayats and 1070 villages have achieved 100% coverage of tap water connections.

Apart from this, J&K has made other remarkable strides under the mission. 100% Rural Schools (23160), 100% Rural Anganwadi Centres (24163) and 100% Rural Health centres (3324) have been provided piped water connections. Besides, 1612 Gram Panchayat Buildings have been covered under piped Water Supply. Also, 5774 Pani Samitis have been constituted in J&K for active involvement of local community in planning, monitoring and successful implementation of JJM.

This highly rewarding mission is being implemented in a decentralized manner following the 'bottom up' approach, wherein the local village community plays a key role starting from planning to implementation and from management to operation and maintenance. The Centre has allocated 2747 crore during the year 2021-22 which is nearly four times than preceding year, 2020-21. J&K plans to achieve the target of HAR GHAR NAL HAR GHAR JAL by August 2022. In its 2nd phase, the UT Government has set a target to cover 11 districts, which includes 153 blocks, 1952 panchayats and 3254 villages with 4.93 lakh Functional Household Tap Connections. In the last phase of this mission, 7 districts involving 121 blocks, 1660 panchayats and 2623 villages shall be covered with 3.12 lakh functional household tap connections.

To ensure quality water supply, 97 water testing laboratories have been set up across Jammu and Kashmir. Government stresses not only on regular tap water supply but also on water quality. Water testing is important for monitoring the operation of water supply, verification of the safety of drinking water, investigation of disease outbreaks, validation process and preventive measures. Third Party Monitor, Concurrent auditors, Media agency have been put in place for greater transparency, accountability and public awareness regarding JJM.

The project includes utilisation of upto 2% of total fund allocation for water quality monitoring and surveillance activities which primarily comprise water quality monitoring by the department through laboratory testing and water quality surveillance by the community through testing local water using field test kits (FTK). To empower the local community on water quality surveillance in J&K, five persons will be trained, especially women in each village from the local community, viz. ASHA workers, health workers, VWSC/ Pani Samiti members, teachers, SHG members etc. To conduct water quality tests using FTK.



In spite of detrimental weather conditions and challenges of transportation in many areas in this difficult terrain, water supply work is in full swing to make provision of tap water supply in villages. The UT Government is committed to provide tap water connections to every household and capacity building of Water Quality Management- testing, monitoring and surveillance. Improved SDG of J&K in NITI Aayog's report is testimony of the government's commitment to ensure safe water supply, sustainability of the source water supply system, along with inter-departmental coordination is significant for the effective implementation of the project.

In order to give a push to the effective implementation of the Mission in J&K, a full-fledged Mission Directorate and Programme Management Unit has been established in the UT.

Moreover, to fast track the pace of work on the JJM and to overcome certain hitches in the fulfilment of procedural formalities, revised modalities have been approved by the Administrative Council of J&K Government recently.

Being aware of the various challenges, JJM is promoting the Panchayati Raj Institutions/Rural Local Bodies to play a key role in managing in-village water supply systems. Since August 2019, it is ascertained that the paradigm shift in entrusting ownership of water supply systems to village level institutions, is being welcomed by the local communities, thus demonstrating 'responsible and responsive leadership' developing at local level. The aim is to bring transformation in the lives of people living in villages and to make villages – 'water, sanitation and hygiene enlightened villages,' i.e. WASH Prabudh Gaon.

In conformity with the motto of Jal Jeevan Mission -BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS, CHANGING LIVES, 185 organizations like UN agencies i.e. UNICEF, UNOPS and trusts, foundations etc have been roped in as sector partners. For building the capacity, reorient and train RWS/W&S/PHE officials, massive capacity building, training and community mobilization programmes have been taken up, for which 104 Key Resource Centres (KRC) have been identified for imparting training at various levels i.e. state, district and village level. All these endeavours are being made to make the Jal Jeevan Mission, a JAN ANDOLAN – PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT.

The JJM has been transforming the face of rural water supply across India over the last two years. Through an integrated service delivery approach, the mission focused on sustainable practices with community-led and community-managed schemes, and source sustainability weaved into the water supply schemes. The transformative approach has allowed for an unprecedented reach to vulnerable communities and for children and women to strive and thrive.

Over and above, Jal Jeevan Mission is an opportunity for local communities to take up water quality surveillance in their villages. In every village, five persons, especially women, are being trained on the use of Field Test Kits (FTK) to test the quality of water supplied, conduct sanitary surveys, and upload the data on JJM portal. All these path breaking initiatives are running parallel with Gandhiji's vision of GRAM SWARAJ wherein the village communities are vested with decision making powers.

Tourist Village Network offers a new hope for rural economy in J&K

Srinagar: The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is known all over the world for Tourism and the tourism sector is one of the main contributors to the GDP of J&K.

The Tourism Industry earns huge foreign exchange and provides employment to the thousands of unemployed youth. In order to strengthen and tap the potential of the tourism sector here, the government of Jammu and Kashmir has launched the Tourist Village Network program under Mission Youth to ensure balanced and equitable development of tourism sector across the length and breadth of the UT. The government has launched this program to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of Independence under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

Under this initiative, the government aims to rejuvenate and transform more than 75 villages in the union territory by promoting tourism and giving sustainable employment for the youth. The initiative launched under the mission youth will work towards giving a facelift to the 75 villages that are already famous for their historical background, picturesque landscape and cultural importance.

This initiative is destined to promote homestays across the UT. The initiative will strengthen the rural economy in the region, turn youth into entrepreneurs and empower women by offering numerous opportunities of employment. Remarking about this unique initiative, the Lieutenant Governor of J&K said that the administration will recognize the uniqueness of each village and showcase the landscape, foster the indigenous knowledge system and promote cultural diversity and heritage of these villages.

More importantly, this initiative has also been launched keeping in view the potential of J&K for shooting purposes. The initiative is also aimed to promote shooting of films and offering financial aid to the villages for their sustainable development. All villages which are part of the initiative will also be provided a digital footprint. This move is also aimed at providing maximum job opportunities to the youth from different backgrounds and ensuring their participation in the policies that have an impact on their lives.

This initiative of Tourist Village Network has the potential and propensity to mobilize the diverse geographical and socio-economic landscape of the union territory. These are several regions in the union territory which despite having greater tourism potential, have not been able to garner requisite attention due to infrastructural bottlenecks. Destinations which lag behind in sphere of tourism infrastructure, can overcome the downsides by introducing homestays

as a means of accommodation facilities for the tourists which do not require heavy investment.

In this context, the government started the movement of promoting homestay tourism in the UT by launching Panchari, a village with mesmerizing beauty in district Udhampur as the first tourist village with home stays.

This new initiative will surely be the harbinger of change especially for those regions which have remained underdeveloped and neglected. The scheme has the potential to uplift the economic status of underdeveloped regions of the union territory. This initiative will surely raise the living standard of the people of the region and will expose the inhabitants of the region to tourists from across the nation and globe and will make them more productive, agile, versatile and resourceful.

The scheme will also lead to cultural enrichment as people from different socio-cultural, socio-economic backgrounds as well as people from across the globe are destined to meet in a homestay type of ambience, thereby leading to cultural exchange in the long run. This will help in the exchange of better and sophisticated practices in and around the world in tourism sector and allied activities. It will also help in exploring new markets for handicrafts and handlooms of UT for which it is known all over the world.

This initiative has more importantly the potential of uplifting and empowering the women of rural areas. This scheme will ensure participation of women in economic activities and decision making at the grass root level and will serve the purpose of eliminating gender discrimination and gender bias, making the society more equitable and progressive.

As the concept of homestays is gaining both ground and momentum across the globe, Indian states like Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Kerala are making huge strides to promote and establish homestay tourism as a source of economic upliftment and empowerment for their people. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is also bestowed with huge potential to emerge as a main destination of homestay brand of tourism. If taken in the right earnest, the concept of tourist village network can be icebreaker to tap the potential of destinations like North Kashmir, Rajouri-Poonch belt, Basohli-Bani-Bhaderwah belt, Basantgarh and Billawar belt etc which have remained untouched till date. If taken in the right perspective, this initiative will truly be a game changer for the rural economy of entire Jammu and Kashmir.



J&K SPORT POLICY 2022

ACCORDS IMPORTANCE TO VIBRANT INCENTIVIZED SPORTS ECOSYSTEM IN UT



JAMMU: In order to make the sports lucrative for youth, the Jammu and Kashmir Government has sanctioned the implementation of Jammu & Kashmir Sports Policy 2022 with the institution of several sports awards, incentives, scholarships, appointment of outstanding sports persons among other features.

This first ever policy document has been created with the vision of 'games & sports for all' and is designed to be in conformity with the National Sports Policy of the country.

The policy document lays the thrust to create vibrant incentivized sports ecosystem through strategic interventions for sports in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. The basic cannons of the policy are to 'Scout', 'Engage', 'Facilitate', and 'Recognise'.

native advertising

The sports policy reflects the value current dispensation—being led by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha—is giving this sector with focus on encouraging sports at both the rural and urban levels while ensuring the engagement of all.

Recently, the Administrative Council (AC), which had met here under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, approved the rollout of the J&K Sports Policy 2022.

Awards & Incentives to Sports Persons

The Awards and incentives are provided to encourage and motivate the outstanding sportspersons for even higher achievements and to attract the younger generation to adopt sports as a career. These awards are also the expression of appreciation and

nation-wide gratitude to winners.

The Policy institutes various annual awards like Sher-i-Kashmir Award for Excellence in Sports for 10 sportsperson, J&K Khel Prot-sahana Award for Sports Association, and two veterans/experienced sportspersons/organizers or referees, Parshuram Award for five best Coaches in different disciplines.

To further motivate the UT's sporting talent, the Sports Policy announces special cash awards to the winners in Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, Asian Championship (Seniors/ Juniors), World Cup/Championships, Youth Olympic Games, South Asian Games, and World University Games/ Championships; in the range of Rs one lakh to Rs one crore.

LG/Chief Minister's Gold Rolling Trophy for Sports Associations, this trophy (Replica) shall be presented to one best recognized UT Sports Associations of the J&K UT for having organized its activities at different District of the UT & participated in large number of recognized competitions outside the UT with medals.

In order to motivate the youth of J&K to excel in sports, the Government shall provide jobs to 30 outstanding sportspersons per calendar year (05 in gazetted cadre and 25 in non-gazetted cadre) for winning medals at the national or representing/winning in international games/ competitions/ championships as per the rules notified by the General Administration Department, J&K.

In the case of a player exceeding the age of participation in specific events or on account of injury limiting participation in

events, their expertise would be used to impart specialized training to players.

In-service sportspersons who excel in sports during their service career, shall be considered for grant of advance increments, as per the rules notified by General Administration Department.

The Government also proposes to grant out of turn promotion to outstanding sportspersons for medal winning performance in Olympic games, Common Wealth Games and Asian games.

UT Award to Outstanding Sportspersons

This will be highest award of the UT Government for the outstanding players of J&K. The award shall be announced every year on the occasion of Republic Day celebrations. Such award will enhance prestige of sportspersons and motivate them to perform better at national and international level.

The scope of award shall be suitably increased/modified and notified by the UT Government from time to time.

Special Cash Award to Outstanding Sportspersons

Special cash awards shall be given to the sportspersons of J&K who win first, second and third position in National and International competitions conducted by authorized international / national sports bodies

To give further impetus to the sports activities, the winners in all recognized National competitions and National School Games in various sports disciplines will be granted specified scholarships from the Directorate of Youth Service & Sports.

The vision of engaging every citizen in some form of physical activity, towards the promotion of a healthy active lifestyle will not only contribute to the health of J&K, but will also contribute to the overall health of the human capital of the nation.

One among the key highlights of this Sports Policy is the progressive mechanism for scouting, grooming talent and leading it to the level of creating qualified world-renowned sportspersons who will make Jammu & Kashmir and the Nation proud. Underscoring the creative initiatives taken to create a flourishing sports culture at the grassroot level, the J&K Sports Policy focuses on the development of the state-of-the-art infrastructure and providing world class coaching.

With the focus on strengthening the spirit of camaraderie and the development of esprit de corps, this sports policy envisages to render support to sportspersons to strive to create a mark on the international platform and stand strong as medal winners.

This sports policy presents the guideline to provide better job opportunities and support to renowned sportspersons. This policy promotes the adoption of robust & transparent governance mechanisms to bolster implementation policy.

Developing the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir as a sports tourism destination by promoting winter and adventure sports along with trails and events in the lap of nature will give the impetus for the socio-economic development of the Union Territory through sectoral convergence and public private partnership ventures. Co-ordination between the government, the J&K Sports Council and the Directorate of Youth Services & Sports will ensure that the implementation of this policy will be exemplary for times to come.

The vision for the Policy is to have, in the next 10 years, a dynamic and innovative ecosystem that promotes and celebrates participation and excellence in sports inculcating a sense of harmony, where all citizens can participate according to their abilities and interests, performing at the highest competitive levels. This will enable sports and games deliver benefits to individual health and well-being, and in turn contribute to nation building and socio-economic impact.

The broad contours of the document is i) to kickstart 'Sports for All & Fitness for All', a result-oriented mechanism that promises and delivers physical, social, as well as economic development of the youth; ii) to identify and nurture talent at the grassroots level and provide them world-class sports infrastructure for achieving excellence in sports and iii) to create a sports-centric ecosystem for all stakeholders through improved job opportunities and creating revenue avenues by making J&K as a sport tourism destination.

Policy Principles, Goals & Objectives

The Policy, in detail, discusses of creating a sports ecosystem through strategic interventions by the Government of J&K which would encompass the five levels of progression in a pyramidal structure, which rise from a broad base of Foundation Level to the highest point of Human Performance Index Development (HPID), with ethos of 'catch them young, train them well and keep them active till the end, for youth & 'include all' for the general populace.

Identification, engagement, facilitation & recognition will form the operative principles for this pyramidal structure, the document envisages.

Each goal has a set of clear objectives which the policy envisages to achieve through a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-Bound) strategy.

Elaborating further about the sports governance system, the sports policy is to realize the goals associated with strengthening the governance, legal and administrative system for the management of sport, games & fitness related initiatives in the UT-J&K.

The sports governance system of the UT-J&K will work on the four cornerstones namely, Transparency, Ethics, Professionalism and Accountability.

The sports resource & knowledge within the UT of J&K will be divided into a two- pillar system: a) Sports Education & Coaching and b) Sports for Excellence.

The policy enumerates about the importance of upgradation of trainers and coaches at different levels through a Strategic Coach Development Program (SCDP) at three levels viz Community level, Intermediate Level, Elite Level.

Other Initiatives

The Policy proposes an array of new initiatives which primarily are going to benefit games and sports by convergence of the resources of different departments. In the light of this, there will be reallocation of infrastructural resources (hard & soft) amongst all stakeholders in accordance to the quantum of initiatives executed by them.

Sports Tourism

Policy encourages promotion of the UTs natural resources such as lakes, rivers, canals and mountains to promote sports tourism. The policy accords special focus to golf, winter sports and adventure and water sports activities, besides hubs and sports tourist centers will be created which would in turn provide additional job opportunities.

The Department shall accord top priority in procuring equipment and establishing supporting infrastructure (soft & hard) facilities.

According to the policy document the 'public private partnership' (PPP) along with foreign mission support for knowledge and technology transfer will help take sports and adventure tourism to the higher level.

Accordingly sports tourism and specialised snow adventure sports training courses at certificate/diploma level will become the new modus for making such sports tourism models to become self-sustaining. The Department of Youth Services & Sports would encourage PPP mode to promote winter sports and adventure tourism.

Winter Sports – Skiing

The existing skiing facility for training as well as leisure games at Gulmarg etc will be developed to international standard. Apart from this, specific focus for skiing infrastructure development should be a thrust initiative at Pehalgam and Sonamarg as these are also a high snowfall receiving regions.

Adventure Sports

Regions like Gurez and other smaller villages with very scenic spots may be developed as nature walk/ trails/rock climbing with single focused sport activity. This will enable the creation of experience destinations and boost the economy alongside providing employment opportunities.

Mountain Hiking & Biking/Tourism

Up-gradation of the training facility and curriculum in mountaineering related courses using upgraded techniques, infrastructure and methodology.

Golf Tourism

JK Sports Council shall in collaboration with the tourism department encourage international golf competitions so that golf tourism is given a spurt. Other districts in the UT would be explored for developing golf as a sport. The Directorate of YSS in collaboration with the Golf Development Authority and tourism department shall strive to involve school children as well.

The vision of the proposed Jammu & Kashmir Sports Policy 2022 is 'to create a dynamic, inclusive, competitive and innovative environment that enables and empowers the Citizens of Jammu & Kashmir to experience and benefit from a strong sports culture- to facilitate the creation of a self-sustaining and participative sports eco-system that makes sports affordable, enjoyable and sustainable for all who wish to play and for those who wish to excel on the global forefront.'

Govt accelerates pace of execution of PMDP projects to improve physical infrastructure in J&K



JAMMU: Central Government's unstinting support in accelerating the pace of development in Jammu and Kashmir has resulted in the transformation of Union Territory on all fronts.

The transformation in every sector has brought economic activity, enabling the UT to march towards a golden future as the government is making every effort to ensure that benefits of development reach all sections of the society.

With an aim to improve the physical infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, the government has accelerated the pace of execution of Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) projects. Official data suggests that the expenditure has reached upto Rs. 34,653 crore ending October 2021 resulting in fast moving improvement of physical infrastructure here. As per the data, 21 major projects have been completed/substantially completed and nine projects are likely to be completed by this financial year.

In another significant achievement, J&K has achieved 100% household electrification under the Saubhagya scheme before the target date and 3,57,405 beneficiaries have been covered. The government has also embarked on a path of smart metering and around 20 Lakh consumers shall be covered under Smart Metering Programme. As of now, the Installation of two Lakh meters is already under way and installation of another six lakh is being finalized under Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme.

Further to improve the power infrastructure as well as distribution in Jammu and Kashmir, Government is committed to increase power generation of J&K as the UT has vast potential for Hydroelectricity.

Power projects with 3500 MW capacity are going to solve most of the power woes in Jammu and Kashmir.

Moreover, in Jammu & Kashmir, all the rural Anganwari centres, Schools and Health institutions have been provided with functional tap water connections. It is worthwhile to note that two districts, Srinagar and Ganderbal have provided 100% functional tap water connection to all households. UT is targeting provision of 100% functional tap water connection to all households by 15th August 2022.

To provide good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected Habitations, all habitations over 1000 population (as per 2011 census) have been provided road connectivity and the habitations with 500 population will be provided roads by ending 2022. In respect of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), J&K has moved in overall ranking in the country from 9th place in 2016-17 to 3rd position in 2020-21. Dedicated policy for maintenance of road infrastructure has been approved by the UT government during 2021-22. Defect Liability Period (DLP) of 3 years has been made mandatory wherein the contractor associated with the project has to maintain the road during the DLP and the contractor has been made liable for the same.

Significant improvement has been achieved in the status of National Highway-44 thereby reducing the time from 10 hours to 6 hours, owing to opening of Navyug Tunnel and completion of different stretches under the four laning of NH-44 project.

To provide livelihood opportunities to weaker sections of society, 21000 Certificates of Vending (CoV) have been issued by government to street vendors under Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, giving them assured right of vending at specified places without any hindrance.

For the cleaning and restoration of Dal Lake, massive cleaning operation of Dal Lake has been started and as a result, more than 10 sq. Kms. of area has been cleared of weed both manually as well as mechanical means. The Committee of Experts constituted by Hon'ble High Court of J&K recommended that LAWDA will engage DMRC (Delhi Metro Rail Corporation) for design, development, manufacture, transport and commissioning of Lake Cleaning Machines in Dal Lake.

In short it can be said that the government with the help of the central government has boosted the infrastructure as well as other developmental aspects in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. In coming years the Union Territory will be transformed both in terms of development as well as economic means as a large number of projects and schemes are underway here which will change the entire economic landscape of Jammu and Kashmir.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

‘Hallmark of present J&K Administration’

JAMMU: Good governance is the process of how public institutions conduct public affairs and manage public resources and guarantee the realization of human rights in a manner essentially free of abuse and corruption and with due regard for the rule of law. It is the power exercised for the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development.

The concept of Good Governance mainly revolves on the concept of responsibility of governments and governing bodies to meet the necessities of the masses as opposed to select groups in the society. Participation, Rule of Law, Transparency, Responsiveness, Consensus orientation, Equity, Effectiveness and Efficiency, Accountability and Strategic vision form the core of good governance.

Good governance is of utmost significance in local governments. It tries to increase engagement between local government and common citizens in order to get the best alternatives that serve the people. Three institutions can be reformed to promote good governance: the state, private sector and civil society. It generates an environment which fosters strong and equitable development and it is also essential for sound economic policies.

In recent years, Good Governance has been the hallmark of Jammu and Kashmir Administration. Several remarkable initiatives have been launched by the government under Good Governance. Be it, Back to Village, My Town My Pride, Jan Sunwai Abhiyan and other, launched by LG’s in J&K in recent years, have proven to be the major success for creating a ‘People Centric-Responsive Administration’ here. These programmes have been appreciated throughout the country as it aimed at energising the Grassroots democracy and empowering the Panchayats as well as people.

In the Good Governance Index, Jammu and Kashmir has registered an increase of 3.7% in good governance indicators from 2019 to 2021. Substantial performances have been witnessed in Commerce and Industry, Agriculture and Allied sectors, Public Infrastructure and Utilities, Judiciary and Public Safety Sectors. Majority of the districts of Jammu and Kashmir have witnessed growth in foodgrain production, horticulture, poultry, agriculture credit etc.

Universal coverage has been accomplished in Kisan Credit Card, Soil Health Card scheme and Animal vaccination.

Moreover, momentous improvements have been reported in Ease of Doing Business, Tax collection, Skill training, Connectivity to rural habitations, Economic empowerment of women, Health insurance coverage and Housing for all. There has been refinement in conviction rates, disposal of court cases and boost in the proportion of women police personnel. Likewise, the Citizen-Centric Governance sector also witnessed impressive all round execution.

After getting appreciated for its performance under Good Governance Index, the J&K Administration in collaboration with Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), GoI recently launched District Good Governance Index for all the districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The district good governance index ranks the districts and presents their comparative picture before the masses.

Under this index, the policies, schemes and programs of the Central and State government are monitored at district level. It not only reinforces the district machinery but also makes districts result oriented and enhances their delivery apparatus. The District Good Governance Index has helped in determining the significance of various governance interventions at district level and provide a futuristic roadmap for upgrading district level governance with targeted interventions.

In another remarkable initiative of Good Governance, LG’s Mulaqaat Program was launched to facilitate public/complainants who have filed grievances on JKIGRAMS to directly communicate with Lieutenant Governor. It has been successful as almost 100% grievances have been redressed raised through this platform.

In brief it can said that the present administration of J&K is mainly focusing on ‘On-The-Spot’ grievance redressal, instantaneous delivery of goods and services to the masses and ‘On-The-Ground’ speedy execution of People-Centric projects, which is being witnessed through the remarkable developmental works and projects that are currently going on across Jammu and Kashmir.

Apki Zameen Apki Nigrani: 'A milestone towards improving service delivery for J&K citizens'

LATEST ADDITION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE TO BRING MORE TRANSPARENCY IN LAND RECORDS SYSTEM

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has taken numerous citizen centric measures to improve service delivery, and towards good governance to bring more transparency and accountability in the existing governance system.

And one among these administrative reforms is digitization of land records with one component 'Apki Zameen Apki Nigrani' under which land holders can easily access to their land records without any administrative hiccups.

Under the Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP), the Union Territory of Jammu-Kashmir has achieved an important milestone to provide the most transparent and accountable services to the common people.

The Digital India Land Records modernization Programme was formally launched in the UT in April-2016 for improving online accessibility to the Land Records System and stopping manipulation of the Land Records thereby making quality of services in Sub Registrar office/Tehsil offices more efficient and transparent.

The DILRMP aims to modernize management of land records; minimize scope of land/property disputes; enhance transparency in the land records maintenance system and facilitate moving eventually towards guaranteed conclusive title to immovable properties in the UT.

As part of the program implementation in Union Territory, 7.70 crore pages of revenue record and 55216 Musavi (maps) have been scanned, besides 3895 Ground Control Points have been established, and Web-based Enterprise Geo-Information System (GIS) has been developed.

Under 'Apki Zameen Apki Nigrani', land Pass Book are being made available in three languages- Hindi, Urdu and English so that people can easily get the required information.

The Revenue Department has been asked to evolve a mechanism of issuing revenue passbooks to the people, containing information on all their legal land possessions within one month for formal issuance by 26th January 2022. The process will be completed in the districts of Jammu and Srinagar by 31st March 2022 and in all other districts by 15th August 2022.

During the release of District Good Governance Index for 20 J&K districts, Union Home Minister, Amit Shah had also listed out ten path-breaking initiatives taken by UT after reorganization which include Apki Zameen, Apki Nigrani and trilingual land pass books was one among them.

The UT administration led by Lieutenant Governor has asked people to avail the full benefits from the scheme like 'Apki Zameen Apki Nigrani', has really empowered the people in the UT.

Besides, the administration had directed the Information & Technology Department to organize public scrutiny of Revenue records under 'Aap ki Zameen Aap ki Nigrani' initiative across all digitally connected Gram Panchayats.

AB-PMJAY SEHAT: 'Gaon Gaon Ayushman' drive launched to target rural population

Srinagar: In order to provide best and advanced health care facilities to the people of Jammu & Kashmir, the government launched AB-PMJAY SEHAT scheme in convergence with the Central Government's AB-PMJAY scheme to provide free of cost 'Universal Health Insurance Coverage' up to Rs. 5 lakh per family on a floater basis.

After the successful start of this scheme, the government launched a massive public outreach campaign 'One person one Golden card' to raise awareness regarding this flagship scheme and enroll maximum people in it.

The 'One person one Golden card' campaign targets the distribution of 58 lakh Golden cards under the AB-PMJAY & AB-PMJAY-SEHAT health insurance schemes, among the beneficiaries by organizing special camps at the Panchayat level. The aim is to cover the poor families from rural background and ensure greater coverage with easy access to affordable healthcare facilities during health emergencies.

Among the 10-point campaign, specific focus has been laid to step up the targeted delivery of healthcare schemes for the poor and to ensure 100 percent saturation of eligible beneficiaries in a mission mode.

Even though the State Health Agency is presently organizing 'Gaon Gaon Ayushman', wherein 'Golden card' generation drive is closely monitored right from the Panchayat level, the 'One Person One Golden Card' campaign fixes a tangible target for covering the remaining 58 Lakh population in the scheme.

Under AB-PMJAY SEHAT scheme, a Ayushman Golden Card is provided to the beneficiary through which the government and private hospitals selected under the scheme can get free treatment upto Rs 5 lakh.

There is no cap on family size and age as this health cover is inclusive for all. Moreover this scheme holds women, children especially girls and those over 60 in special regard. The scheme provides those

in need to get secondary healthcare benefits offered by specialists like cardiologists and urologists. Moreover, advanced medical treatment like that for cancer, cardiac surgery and others is also covered.

Primary health care is people's movement and their participation and mobilization to access the benefits is a key to make this campaign a huge success. SEHAT is a unique health scheme which does not discriminate and brings out the spirit of social equality in the health sector. Good health and well-being of people is the ultimate aim of the government. J&K is one of the first UTs to implement the 'Universal Health Insurance Coverage'.

As per the data available, till date 60 lakh Golden cards have been generated and 16.36 lakhs (80%) families have been registered with at least one family member verified under PM-JAY and AB-PMJAY-SEHAT Scheme. Removing the burden out-of-pocket expenses, PMJAY aims to make the entire process of paying for healthcare cashless. All public and empanelled private hospitals have been directed to not charge any extra payment for medical care from all PMJAY beneficiaries to reduce corruption or delay in services.

Under AB-PMJAY and AB-PMJAY SEHAT, during the current policy period, 147582 cases have already been benefited amounting to Rs. 221.66 Cr, out of which Rs. 129.83 Cr have already been paid to the hospitals by the insurance company, thus ensuring free of cost specialized treatment to all.

Additionally, the beneficiaries under this scheme can seek treatment across India. This scheme covers pre-existing illness and makes mandatory treatment in all public hospitals. Since the scheme covers such a large population, it will be purchasing services from private healthcare providers. This scheme also encourages the production of more affordable healthcare equipment and drugs.

As health insurance is a financial necessity for everyone, this scheme will certainly improve the quality of life of the weaker sections of the society by ensuring they get timely care and finances to tackle their health issues.



'JAN BHAGIDARI'

A platform to be part of governance

Remarkable initiative aims at making government working more transparent, participatory

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has made 'Jan Bhagidhari' as main mantra towards making the dispensation more responsive, accountable and transparent besides ensuring rapid growth and development in the Union Territory.

In order to ensure effective implementation of flagship and other government schemes at grassroots level, UT government has launched an intensive public outreach campaign to raise awareness about the schemes being implemented for empowerment of common masses.

The campaign included targeted delivery of health insurance among the rural population, quantifiable panchayat wise self employment and installation of functional tap water connection to each household besides a slew of public programmes to facilitate Jan bhagidhari by making government working more transparent and participatory for general public.

One of the major initiatives to further public participation in overall development process in the UT, the J&K government launched the 'Janta Ki Scheme-Janta ki Bhagidari' campaign. The programme focused on improving public access to BEAMS-EMPOWERMENT portal. It is a simple way of viewing details about all ongoing works in an area to inform and solicit people's participation in development process and corruption free governance.

The idea is to make working of government institutions more transparent at the grassroots level and enable people to keep a check on progress of development projects. Every citizen can now access details about the type and extent of work under execution in their area or any part of the Union Territory at the click of a button. This technologically advanced utility will ensure quality and timely completion of development works.

The information available on this one-stop platform www.beamsjk.gov.in can even be utilized for timely feedback and suggestions by public for improving expenditure outcomes in spirit of 'Jan Bhagidari' thereby enabling them to directly participate in development of their area.

As on date, the portal hosts 33099 works being executed in the Union Territory at a cumulative cost of around Rs 12200 crore with micro details of up to village level.

Jammu and Kashmir is first in the country for taking lead in enforcing reforms in expenditure management and account of each penny has been made available in public domain.

Another initiative of the government, Budget, Estimation, Allocation and Monitoring System (BEAMS) is an online computerized web based application for preparation and authorization of budget. It enables online flow of resources and the departments can allocate funds to their field offices through this system. It supports reliable, accurate and better monitoring control for budget planning and expenditure audit besides real-time reconciliation of accounts in comparison to manual budgeting process which lacks transparency.

The government has taken a string of other e-initiatives in addition to BEAMS and EMPOWERMENT to achieve greater transparency and accountability in its functioning. Some prominent among those included PROOF (Photographic Record of On-site Facility), which is a mobile app for monitoring progress on all the works allocated to different departments. It gives the public a pictorial view of works along with its geographical coordinates including latitude and longitude besides user comments on work progress.

JKPaySys (JK Payment System) is one another e-initiative of the government to enable online submission of bills to treasuries eliminating unwarranted delays and corrupt practices. Further, as a result of sustained institutional reforms in the UT and sharp focus on completion of works in a time-bound manner, there is a substantial impact on ground in terms of completion of projects.

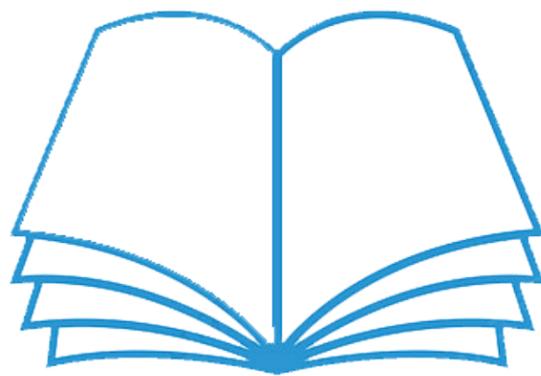


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Till date, a total of 21943 projects have been completed across the Union Territory including 9229 projects completed during 2018-19 and 12637 during 2019-20.

The primary objective of all these remarkable initiatives is to ensure public participation in the overall development process in the UT. These steps are aimed at strengthening the institution of Jan bhagidari (public participation) making it an integral part of transparent and accountable governance.

The J&K administration has been earnestly working since the past two years to make the entire governance structure transparent and accessible to the public in a total hassle free manner.



JKPI Publications

THE IMPACT OF MAJOR MINERALS ON THE ECONOMY OF J&K – AN OVERVIEW

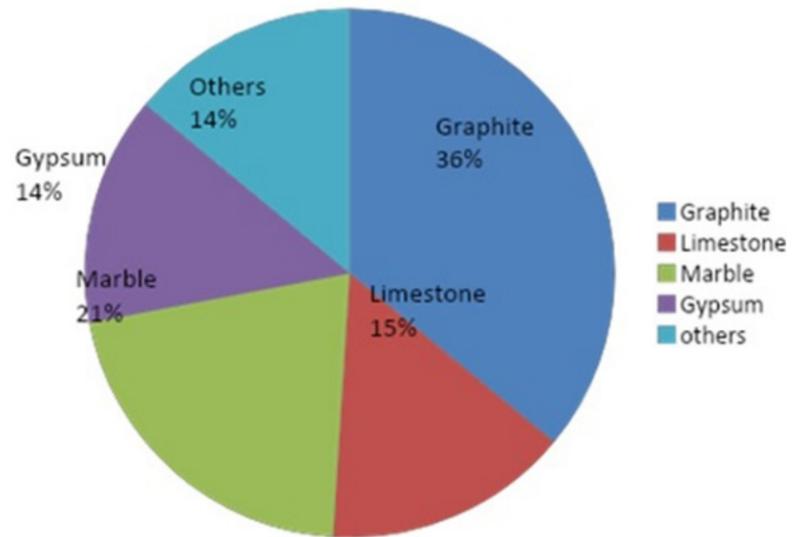
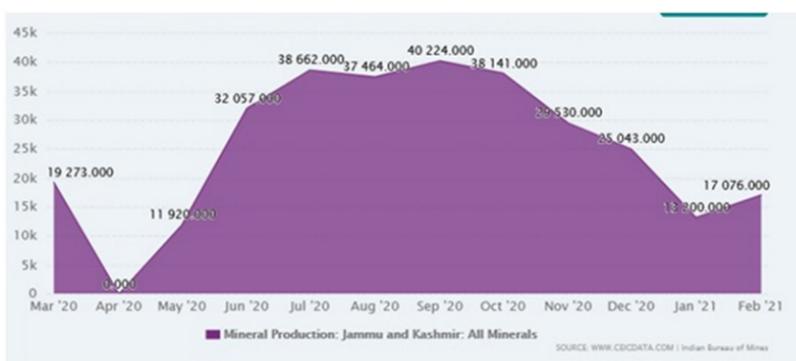


MADIHA TRUMBOO

Minerals have long been considered as the basis for the development of human civilization through time. The mineral resources play a significant role in the economic development of any nation. Jammu and Kashmir is endowed with a rich variety of valuable minerals covering an area of 13334 sq. kms. The valley's mountains are treasured with abundant mineral wealth, constituting the metallic minerals like iron and copper; non-metallic minerals like limestone, gypsum, dolomite, quartzite, graphite; the building stones like slate, marble, and granite; and the energy minerals like coal. The Union Territory (UT) is the exclusive holder of borax and sapphire and possesses 36% of graphite, 21% of marble and 14% of gypsum. The Kashmir valley comprises sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rocks whereas the outer hill division covering Jammu comprises Siwaliks, Murees and Dogra slates. Boulder, bajari and sand are the most essential requirements for construction of infrastructure projects like real estate, roads, bridges, multiplexes, buildings and industrial units. The demand of sand is mainly met by river borne sediments of river Jhelum which is restricted between two stretches i.e., Lasjanbridge to Rajbagh and cement bridge to Panzinara.

At present, Jammu and Kashmir has 110 registered major and minor mineral-based units. Among these, Jammu province constitutes 72 units and Kashmir province has 38 units respectively. In the present time, mining is the basic factor for industrial development, because it alone provides means for advanced industrial operations. Mining contributes to a significant portion of gross domestic product (GDP). According to the recent data from the department of Geology and mining J&K, the revenue released from the Kashmir division during the year 2018-2019 was Rs 357,962,474.0 whereas the Jammu division contributed to Rs 22,34,04,779 in the year 2017-2018.

In order to utilize services of men and machinery of the drilling division, various initiatives have been taken to bring all the rigs in working condition for the best achievement of drilling targets. In 2016, 'Quarry Mining Project' was initiated in village Zawoora, Pantha chowk over an area of 3.90 hectare. District Srinagar started the project for Quarrying building stones, the different grade of output from the crusher will be primarily used in the construction of National Highway and District road and also the material will be sold in the market for various civil works in and around Srinagar District. Therefore there is always a good demand for the mineral in the domestic market. As per the Government revenue records, the proposed production of Quarry building material is about 1,50,000 metric tons per annum. The method of mining is 'Open cast semi mechanized' using rock breakers with need based drilling and controlled blasting.



Source: www.ceicdata.com – Indian Bureau of Mines

A distinguished economic analyst, Mr. Ejaz Ayoub believes that there is a tremendous potential as far as superficial knowledge of the mineral wealth of Jammu and Kashmir is concerned. For deeper exploration, it demands sizable investment in research and development with tie-ups with global excavation agencies. There is a wide unknown mineral space in this geography which can only be monetized if there is deep outcome-oriented research.

Recently, the government of J&K has welcomed many UAE based business groups for investing in real estate, infrastructure, horticulture and tourism. The trusted partnership of J&K- Dubai trade has set up an investment proposal worth Rs 45,000 Crore and Rs 18,300 crore exclusively in the real estate sector. It will be a golden opportunity for the UT to provide construction materials like cement, bricks, limestone, gypsum, steel, marble for the infrastructure development and construction projects. The proposed deal will open extensive avenues for direct and indirect employment for the youth mainly inhabiting the remote areas of the territory. Hence, this tie-up can boost the metal and mining sector which has been witnessing sluggish growth from the past few decades.

THE THREE MAJOR AND EXQUISITE MINERALS:

Gypsum: It predominantly occupies the districts of Baramulla, Kathua, Ramban and Doda. It is used in cement, fertilizer, plaster of paris & sanitary ware. It is present in the mountains of Uri and Baramulla area of Kashmir in a stretch of about 40 km along the strike.

Limestone: The limestone reserves in J&K constitute 15% of the total reserves in India. It is found in the mountains of Khrew falling under district Pulwama and in Khanmoh area of Srinagar city. It is used in quicklime, bleaching- powder, glass, paper, paints and is the major raw material for cement industries of J&K.

Coal: The coal is extracted from the coal fields of Udhampur & Kalakot. It is used in manufacturing of battery covers and used as fuel. The steam coal is used in industries using boilers and holds its dominance in the cement industries. Coal is primarily a source of electricity generation in the union territory.



MINERAL MAP OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. J&K has abundant mineral wealth but due to lack of exploration, delayed approvals, bad weather conditions, improper machinery and equipment the valley suffers from a static growth. Hence the Government needs to come up with solid and simplified policies to extract minerals and open employment opportunities for the youth.
2. All the major and minor mines of the UT which fall outside the radius of 50 km of the eco-fragile zones should be allowed

to operate while taking utmost care of the environment and natural wealth of the forests.

3. The government should provide proper road connectivity for the safe and efficient transportation that will enhance the supply chain of minerals.
4. There should be some incentives from the government to the lease holders for the purchase of heavy/light machinery components that are used for the extraction of varied minerals.
5. The depressions of landforms formed by deep mining should be used for dumping industrial and municipal waste.
6. During the lease period of 5 years, the project proponent is committed for plantation of 250 trees of local species in the quarry statutory area and some feasible location outside the quarry site which shall be developed as green belt with proper care and maintenance.

KASHMIR'S KAREWAS, WOEDDERS, CRUMBLING UNDER URBANIZATION



ADEELA HAMEED

Kashmir is an oval-shaped basin with a plain area of nearly 5600 kms. The valley has large tracts of plateaus, the Karewas (one of the most valuable geomorphological assets of Kashmir); locally known as Woedders. These are similar to inter-mountain fills that comprise of unconsolidated gravel and mud. Geologists say that Karewas of Kashmir were formed during the Pleistocene period; a period that began about 2.6 million years ago and lasted until about 11,700 years ago. This was the time when the Valley was underwater, resembling a massive lake. When water drained out through Khadanyar (Baramulla), huge mud deposits were left during the process. These mud deposits solidified, and came to be known as Karewas; massive plateaus that are dry but highly fertile.

QUARRYING THE FERTILE KAREWAS

The Karewas have a very old history and are known as geological and archaeological treasures of the Valley. These Woedders remain an unnoticed heritage of the region. They are so flat and massive that Srinagar International Airport is built on a similar plateau, in district Budgam, called the Karewa Damodar. However, now, due to massive urbanization, the Karewas are under severe threat. They are being razed to the ground, bulldozed.

Since the last 25 years, almost 20-30% of these geological formations have been plundered in Pulwama and Budgam. These pristine structures could have been developed as a tourist attraction, easily enticing enthusiastic archaeologists and geologists from the world over. But authorities did not grant the Karewas their rightful protection by declaring them as heritage sites. By allowing excavation of soil and clay from Karewas, the authorities paved a way for huge geological damage.

For the construction of Srinagar Ring Road, the government recently issued an order to excavate soil/clay from the Karewas of Pattan. Environmentally conscious residents of the Valley, including a local activist from Pattan, Hamid Rather held protests in Srinagar city against the move. Many suggested constructing this alternative highway around Srinagar city (Ring Road) from clay or soil displaced from the flood-spill channel, extending from Rambagh to Narbal. However, all efforts were in vain.

The Valley is bound to lose large tracts of Karewas in the next 2-3 years if alternative sites, like Wular embankments, or flood-spill channels, are not explored for clay excavation.

FOSSILS IN THE KAREWAS

Prof. Khurshid Ahmad Parry, in his research article, published in Current Science (Volume 100) explains that geological research has been carried out in various parts of Kashmir valley by several geologists since a very long time. The findings have revealed several fossils buried in the upper reaches of Budgam.

As per the studies undertaken by Godwin Austen (1864), it was reported that fish scales were found in Karewas of Gogjee Pathri, and upper mountain areas of Liddermud and Yusmarg. Reports by Patterson (1940) also revealed that a now-extinct elephant species, called *Elephas hysudricus*, was found in the Karewas of Pulwama and Budgam. The article further states that fossils of *Sivatherium giganteum* (an extinct species of Giraffe) have been found in the Samboora Karewas near Pampore.

Noted geologist of Kashmir valley, Prof. Abdul Majid Bhat,



has researched extensively on the Khonmoh fossil park, which is said to be a 252 million-year-old fossil site. He has also been raising concern on the destruction of Karewas, demanding that the government initiate the necessary legal framework to declare Karewas as heritage sites.

FLOOD THREATS

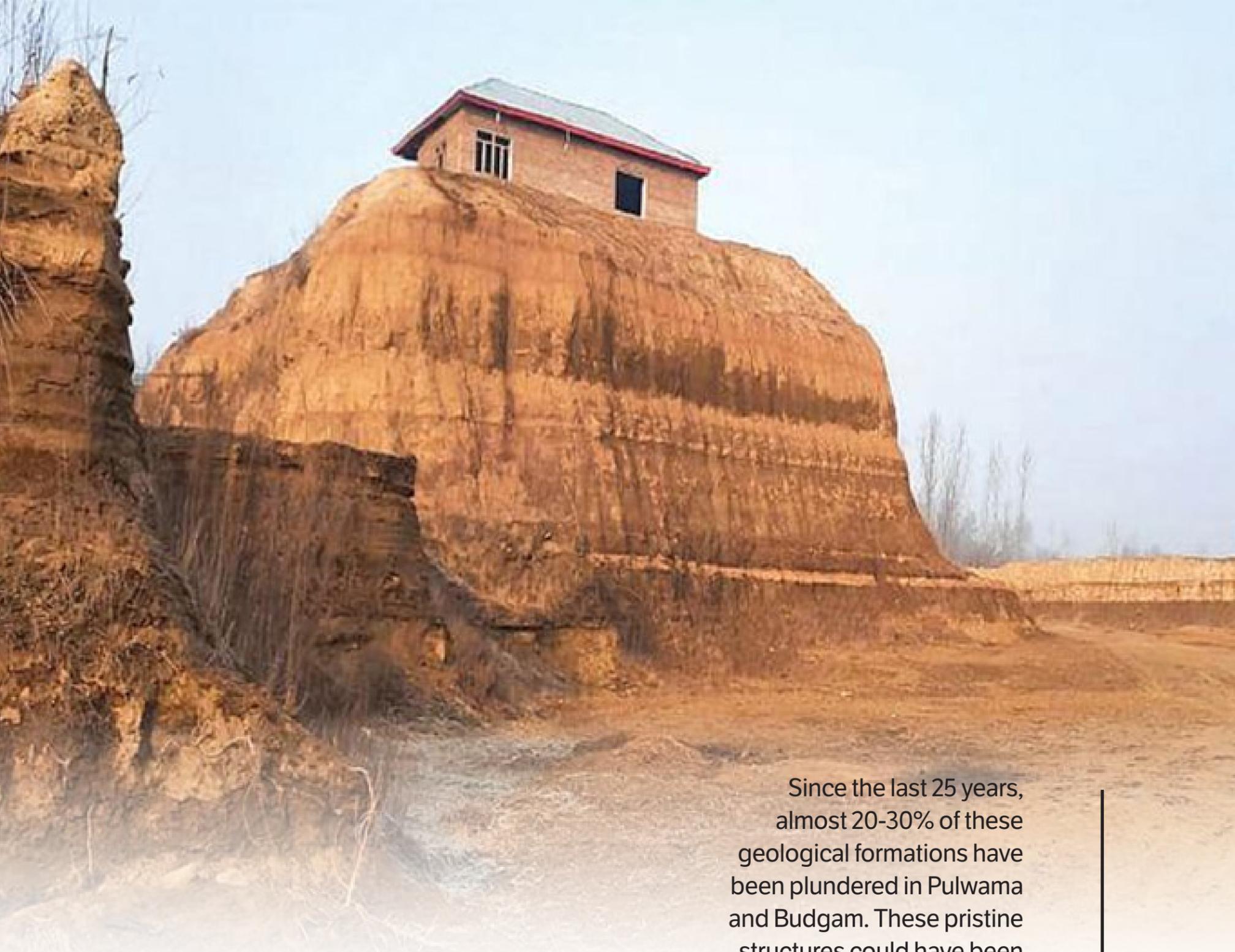
Continuous soil excavation from the Karewas, and deforestation has led to extensive siltation of the Jhelum river, causing massive damage during floods. But no reported crackdowns have been attempted against soil excavators operating in broad daylight across several areas of Budgam, Pulwama and Pattan. Central Kashmir's Budgam district is mostly affected as excavation has been underway for more than two decades now. An estimated 30% of the Karewas in Khansahib, Budgam and Chadoora alone has been torn down by huge soil excavating machines and JCBs. Even in Gundchal Arwani of South Kashmir, demolition of the Karewas has been reported.

THE QAZIGUND-BARAMULLA RAILWAY PROJECT

After the Qazigund-Baramulla railway project was started in Kashmir in the mid 90s, massive soil excavation work was taken up in Pattan, Pulwama and Budgam's Karewas. Hundreds of trucks, lorries, and carriers were pressed into work by various construction firms which were given contracts to carry the clay/soil used for creating elevated railway tracks. The Karewas of Pulwama and Budgam became the direct target of plunder. It has been reported that the muck used for making elevated railway tracks from Qazigund to Baramulla contains 90% of the material obtained from the Karewas. A beautiful hillock at village Khanda in Chadoora Tehsil of Budgam was razed to the ground within a year or so during this process.

THE LAND OF SAFFRON

Saffron cultivated on thousands of hectares of the Karewas, especially in Pampore, Samboora, Parigam, Wanpora, Kaisermulla, Sarai Khampora, Kuzweira, Kultreh and a number of other villages in Pulwama and Budgam, has been affected drastically. In Wadipora and Kultreh villages, the Karewas were vandalized by brick kilns as dozens of such kilns were set up in these areas. Clay from these Karewas was then used to make bricks. As a result, these beautiful plateaus are now defaced. In addition, Karewas around Ichgam, Ichkoot and Budibagh have been destroyed too. Many are



apprehensive that Karewas of Budgam and Pulwama will further be destroyed now that work on Srinagar Semi Ring Road has already started.

Chadoora, Hyathpora and Nagam Karewas were once famous for quality almond orchards. But these, too, have been vandalized as demands for clay are increasing with each passing day. Farmers may be held responsible as well. Desiring to gain a good sum in exchange, many welcome construction firms to excavate their owned land.

The government is adamant in making the environmental impact assessment documents public. So, people are still unaware of the risk Karewas is under, or the kind of measures National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) will take to cause minimum environmental disaster.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The geomorphological local heritage of Kashmir, the Karewas, needs to be saved from destruction at all costs.

1. The government must immediately call upon the NHAI to ensure no soil excavation is done around Karewas during Srinagar Ring Road construction.

2. EIA and related documents explored before construction need to be made public.

3. It is imperative to explore soil excavation options from flood spill channels and Wular embankments. Places, such as these, need proper desiltation. This will, in turn, help save the rural/urban population during floods.

4. The muck or silt dredged from flood-spill channels and embankments might have moisture. However, the same may be

Since the last 25 years, almost 20-30% of these geological formations have been plundered in Pulwama and Budgam. These pristine structures could have been developed as a tourist attraction, easily enticing enthusiastic archaeologists and geologists from the world over. But authorities did not grant the Karewas their rightful protection by declaring them as heritage sites. By allowing excavation of soil and clay from Karewas, the authorities paved a way for huge geological damage....



dried and transported to various locations for use in construction.

5. The saffron lands need to be protected, with emphasis on disallowing construction of brick kilns on these fertile lands. Saffron is one of the backbones of the local economy. So, the authorities should place importance on its security.

6. With Kashmir's geologists endorsing protection of the Karewas, and these lands being home to quite a number of important fossils, the authorities must make a move to coronate the Woedders as heritage sites. Such a step would go a long way in supporting archaeological studies and tourism in the future.

7. All illegal dredging operations in and around these Karewas must be stopped if fertile lands need to be restored.

IRANIAN APPLE IMPORTS IN INDIA: A SERIOUS ISSUE THAT NEEDS DEALING WITH



JIGYASA GULATI

APPLE CULTIVATION IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

India, considered the fruit and vegetable basket of the world, is the second-largest producer of apples with an annual production of 88.98 million tonnes from an area of 7.21 million hectares. There are three major regions leading the production in India with Jammu and Kashmir being the largest producer where apple cultivation is a highly profitable economic activity. A farm-based, labor-intensive, and commercially attractive economic activity, apple cultivation contributes about 77% of the total fruit grown in the country. This production is followed by Himachal Pradesh with a contribution of around 19% and Uttarakhand with a contribution of around 2.52%. Apple production contributes 60-65% of the total output of Jammu and Kashmir's horticulture and around 8% to UT's GDP. Consequently, it has been declared as the "Agri. Export Zone for Apple and Walnuts". This cash crop is a source of livelihood both directly and indirectly to a population of 3.3 million people from the region. According to the govt. figures, Jammu and Kashmir produced 19.5 lakh tonnes of apples in 2019-20. However, farmers from all three apple cultivating regions are facing a challenge.

IRANIAN APPLE IMPORTS IN INDIA

Apple growers in India have been protesting for over a month demanding immediate action against illegal imports of Iranian Apples. They claim that Iranian apples are entering India disguised as Afghanistan's apples under SAFTA (South Asian Trade Agreement) which frees the product from import duties. According to growers from Northern India, 18,000 tons of Iranian apple have already entered the Indian market evading the import duty of Rs. 800,000 on each container. There are reports showing a jump in the import of Iranian apple by 573 percent to reach 30372 metric tonnes with expectations of importing almost 4.5 lakh metric tonnes by the end of March 2022. According to Basheer Ahmad Basheer, chief of the Kashmir Valley Fruit Growers cum Dealers Union, even after the suspension of the free trade agreement, Iranian apples entered the Indian market with a 15% import duty and 35% cess making it difficult to compete with its low price. The fruit is entering India from Iran via Mumbai, Cochin ports or Afghanistan via the Wagah border.

Evading import duties makes the Iranian apple much cheaper as compared to apples produced in India. Apple growers have complained about a 50% drop in the market prices. According to Fayaz Ahmad Malik, head of the fruit grower's association in Sopore in Baramulla district, per box prices have dropped from Rs. 800-1100 to Rs. 400-600. With this is the growing fear of produce getting rotten in the cold storage and incurring huge losses due to reduced demand for domestically produced apples. At the same time, there are around 1.75 crores of unsold boxes at apple markets with 2.5 crore boxes outside apple stores. If the fruit is not sold in time, it will rot.

Apple growers are also complaining against the selling of apples imported from Iran in the Azadpur Mandi in Delhi. According to them, any newly imported product should be sold in the New mandi and not in the Azadpur mandi. Azadpur Mandi General Secretary Kumar confirmed to Moneycontrol that Iranian apples have been arriving at the mandi, hitting homegrown apples.

There are also fears of not meeting phytosanitary standards. Recently, the agricultural ministry suspended the imports of Kiwi from Iran following several interceptions of quarantine and non-quarantine pests, a threat to the biosecurity of the country. Lokinder Bisht, president of the Progressive Growers Association claimed that the presence of insects like codling moth and acuba scale has been noticed in certain shipments of apple from Iran. He demanded a thorough inspection of all consignments received from Iran before releasing them in the Indian market.

Apple cultivators from Jammu and Kashmir, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh have joined hands and raised their voices. They have held press conferences, written to the Union Agricultural Minister, Lieutenant General of Jammu, and Kashmir, and to the Honourable Prime Minister but to no avail.

However, there are opposing views as well. In one of the interviews, the Directorate of Horticulture stated that the fears are unfounded. Ajaz Ahmad mentioned that more than 16 lakh metric tonnes of apples have been exported and sold already. Apples stored in cold storage are mainly sold from April onwards.

Why does it need to be resolved immediately?

Apple cultivation directly or indirectly provides livelihood support to more than 3.3 million people in Jammu and Kashmir. Notwithstanding, the valley's biggest economy of around Rs. 10,000 crore comprising the apple industry has been facing several challenges and issues. The apple cultivation has already incurred huge losses owing to outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). And now, with this unexpected challenge of illegal imports of Iranian Apples, the fruit growers are made to suffer needlessly.

Moreover, to uphold the promise of development and to decrease the trust deficit, government should take an immediate call on apple growers' concerns. The aim of 'Make in India' won't be achieved if domestic producers face asymmetric challenges. It's well recognized that the quality of apples grown in Jammu and Kashmir is very good and can compete with any apple variety in the world. However, a conducive environment along with fair trade practices is needed to let the apple market grow and flourish.

Furthermore, the government in March 2021, launched a 'High-Density Plantation' scheme that aims at covering a targeted area of 5500 hectares by March 2026 to enhance production and productivity and raise the farmers' income. But with no demand and low returns on produce, the scheme won't bear any fruits.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATION

"THE C3 STRATEGY"

Consult- Apple cultivators have been protesting since January and they raised their concerns last year as well. It is imperative on the part of the government to pay heed to their calls and immediately hold a consultation with apple cultivators to understand their concerns and find a mutually agreed solution.

Check- Nothing is better than holding fair practices. Government should immediately check the rerouting of apple imports. This is not only important for apple cultivators but also for the International and domestic image of India. The country should stand for fair practices and hold the culprits accountable. Moreover, it is the duty of the government to listen and work for its citizens.

Construct- The government needs to find a permanent solution to this periodically emerging problem. In Feb 2021, the fruit growers were on street demanding action against the illegal and unrestricted import of Iranian apples. Therefore, the current situation gives the government an opportunity to find a sustainable solution to end the sufferings of the fruit growers.

The Wular Lake, one of Asia's largest freshwater lakes, has been an inspiration to poets and kings. The lake is a source of livelihood for the fishing community that lives along its shores. **Here are some pictures.**

