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

COVER STORY

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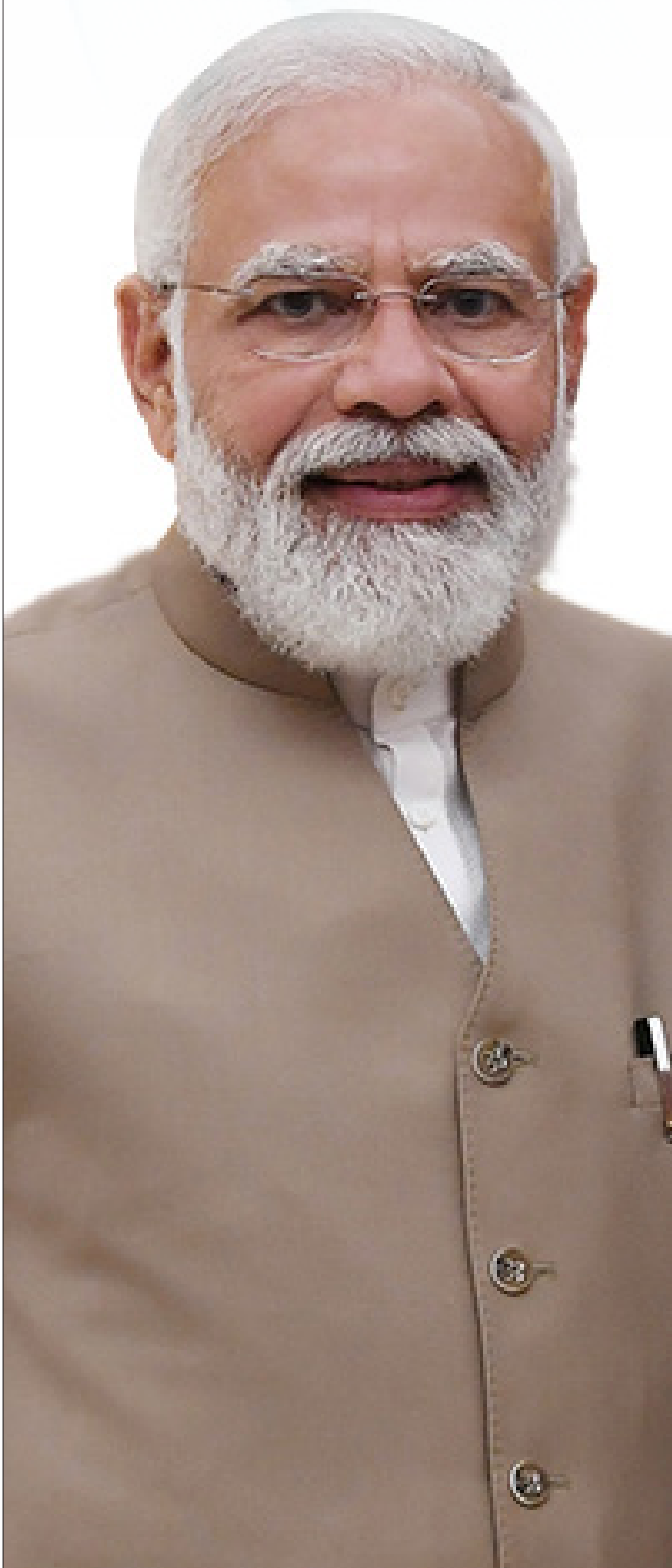
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J&K PRESENTING NEW EXAMPLE OF DEMOCRACY, DETERMINATION: PM MODI



Palli: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said Jammu and Kashmir is presenting a new example of “democracy and determination” as numerous development initiatives were undertaken in the last two to three years.

Visiting Jammu and Kashmir for the first time since the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, he also said that Rs 38,000 crore of private investment has come to the union territory (UT) in the last two years, besides witnessing a heavy flow of tourists.

Modi was speaking in Palli village in Samba district, around 17 km from Jammu, on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day. The speech was relayed to all gram panchayats across the country.

The prime minister also inaugurated and laid foundation stones for multiple development initiatives worth Rs 20,000 crore for Jammu and Kashmir.

Modi said that his government has implemented as many as 175 central laws and the Panchayati Raj system for the UT’s people who were “deprived” of these benefits when Jammu and Kashmir had special status under Article 370.

“Jammu and Kashmir is presenting a new example of democracy and determination as numerous development initiatives were undertaken in the last two to three years,” he said.

Modi also expressed happiness that it was for the first time that elections for the three-tier Panchayati Raj system were conducted peacefully sometime back in Jammu and Kashmir.

The last two to three years have seen a lot of development initiatives being undertaken in Jammu and Kashmir and about 175 central laws were implemented here that gave due rights to the people of the UT, he said.

“The Panchayati Raj system being a good scheme... it was tom-tommed, people felt proud about it, which was not wrong. But people of Jammu and Kashmir were deprived from the benefits of this system...until our government came to power in Delhi,” Modi said.

The prime minister said he was happy that when democracy has reached the grassroots in Jammu and Kashmir, he was talking to gram panchayats across the country from here.

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has directly provided funds worth Rs 22,000 crore to panchayats of the union territory for “strengthening grassroots democracy” as compared to the Rs 5,000 crore allocation made under this head earlier, he said.

The central government’s policies and schemes are being “implemented rapidly” and this is benefiting the UT’s villages, Modi said and listed schemes like those that provided cooking gas connection, electricity, water and toilets.

The prime minister said that Jammu and Kashmir will write a new chapter of success in the next 25 years which is the ‘Amrit Kaal’ period of Indian independence. The youth of the region will get employment with the rapid pace of development, he said.

He said Jammu and Kashmir’s residents, who were not getting the benefits of reservation till Article 370 was operational, are now getting it.

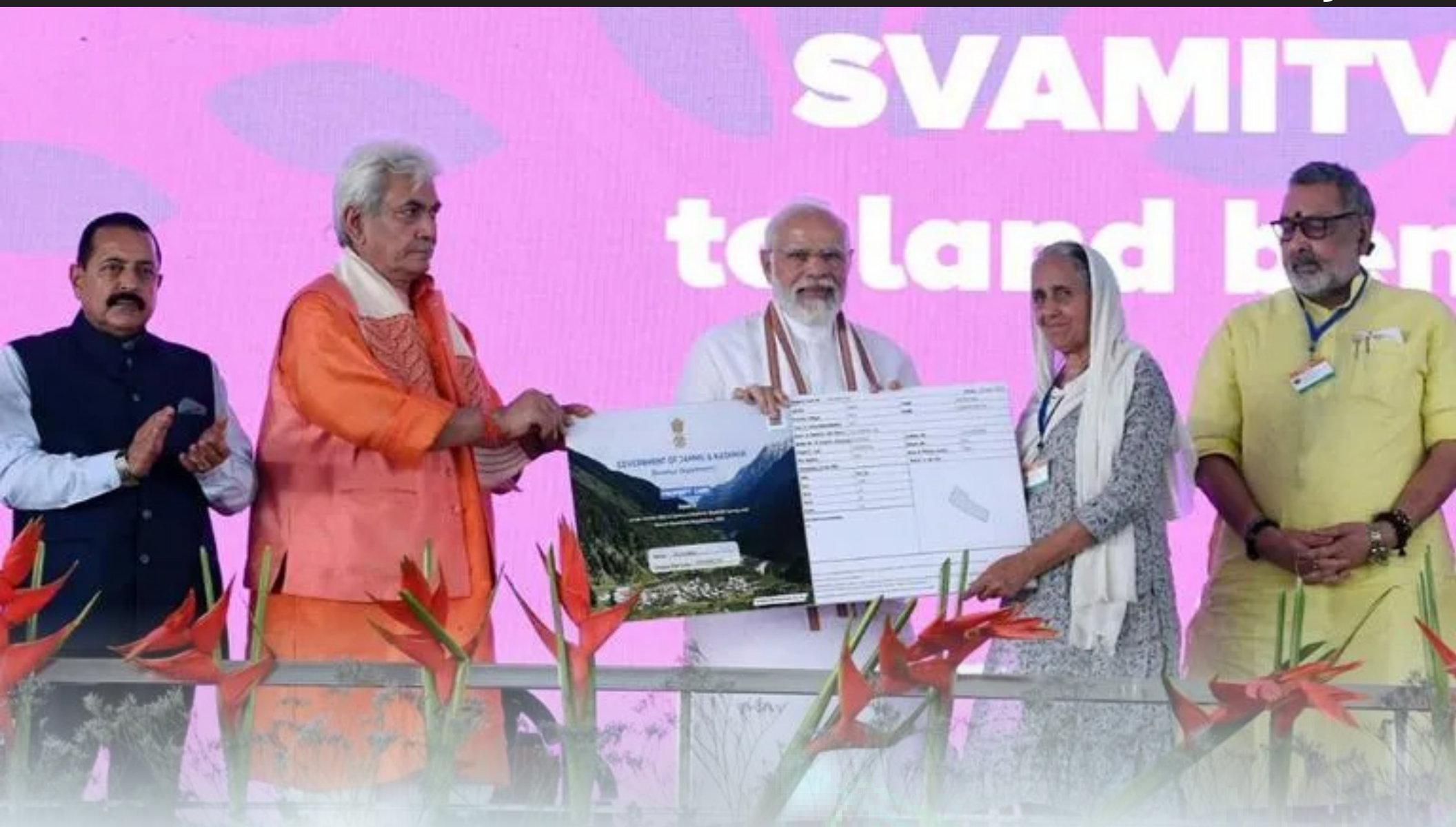
“We are making attempts that all areas of Jammu and Kashmir remain connected for 12 months of the year...we are also ensuring the same for border villages under the ‘vibrant village scheme’ that was announced in the recent Union Budget,” he said.

Border states and UTs like Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab will benefit from this border villages development scheme, Modi said.

He also urged farmers to move towards natural farming as the current system of using chemical fertilisers was destroying and contaminating the soil and the underground water.

Modi asked citizens to undertake segregation of dry and wet garbage and sought the cooperation of everyone to achieve a “carbon neutral” ecosystem.

The prime minister also talked about the importance of using solar pumps in agriculture, and also discussed about the usage of LED bulbs and solar cookers while interacting with panchayat representatives of Jammu and Kashmir.



PM INAUGURATES, LAYS FOUNDATION STONE OF PROJECTS WORTH RS 20K CR

Palli: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated and laid the foundation of multiple development projects worth over Rs 20,000 crore in Jammu and Kashmir, including the opening of the Banihal-Qazigund road tunnel to establish all-weather connectivity between the two regions of the union territory.

Modi, who celebrated the Panchayat Raj Diwas at Palli Gram Panchayat in Samba, said the youth of Jammu and Kashmir will get employment opportunities through overall development of the union territory.

“The inauguration and laying of the foundation of a project of Rs 20,000 crores took place today. This will give new impetus to development of Jammu and Kashmir,” Modi said in an address to the people here.

He said that it is a big day for speeding up the development of the region. “I congratulate the people of Jammu and Kashmir for this.”

The Prime Minister inaugurated the Banihal-Qazigund road tunnel to establish all-weather connectivity between the Jammu and Kashmir regions of the union territory.

The 8.45 Km long tunnel will reduce the road distance between Banihal and Qazigund by 16 Km and reduce the journey time by around one-and-a-half-hours, officials said.

The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of three road packages of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway,

being built at a cost of over Rs 7,500 crore, apart from launching ‘Amrit Sarvor’ initiative seeking to develop and rejuvenate 75 water-bodies in every district of the country.

Among other projects, Modi also laid foundation stone of Rattle and Kwar hydroelectric projects, a 850 MW facility to be constructed on Chenab river in Kishtwar at a cost of around Rs 5,300 crore, and 540 MW Kwar hydroelectric project to be build on the same river at a cost of over Rs 4,500 crore.

In order to further expand the network of ‘Jan Aushadi Kendras’ in Jammu and Kashmir, and to make good quality generic medicines available at affordable prices, 100 centres were inaugurated by the Prime Minister. These centres are located in remote corners of the union territory.

PM also handed over ‘SVAMITVA’ (survey of villages and mapping with improvised technology in village areas) cards to beneficiaries under the scheme. The cards will give villagers documentary proof of their ownership of properties so that they can use them for financial benefits if required.

He also digitally transferred prize money of Rs 44.70 crore to the bank accounts of 322 awardee Panchayats across 31 states/UTs in the country which are winners of awards given across different categories.

Palli becomes India's first 'carbon neutral panchayat'

Palli: The nondescript hamlet of Palli in Jammu and Kashmir's border district of Samba entered into the 'modern history' of India on Sunday as country's first "carbon neutral panchayat" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicating to the nation 500 KV solar plant, installed in a record time of nearly three weeks.

Modi, inaugurated the solar power plant amid cheer and applause from the people.

The prime minister said that Palli has shown the way to the country for achieving carbon neutral state. "People of Palli have helped in the project. They have also provided food to people engaged in the project," he said.

In all 1,500 solar panels put up on the total area of 6,408 square metres will provide clean electricity to 340 houses in the model panchayat under the central government's 'Gram Urja Swaraj' programme, officials said.

The project was completed at a cost of Rs 2.75 crore in a record time, officials said. The electricity generated will be distributed to the village, having a

daily requirement of 2,000 units, through the local power grid station.

The village, which has 450 houses, have been given solar 'Chulhas' (stoves) and all the houses will be covered by the next phase after the prime minister's visit, the officials said.

Palli's sarpanch Ravinder Sharma, who interacted with the prime minister, told him that village has LED bulbs, solar cookers and solar stoves.

Asked by the prime minister whether the village has solar pumps for irrigation of farmlands, Sharma said that 10 such pumps have been installed and 40 more will be installed in the next phase.

Prime Minister asked the villagers to celebrate the birthday of their hamlet after fixing a date for it. "You should always celebrate the birthday of the village. All people who belong to this village and are living should be called back to participate in the celebrations," Modi said.

Sharma said that April 24 is the Palli village's formation day and they will celebrate its birthday.

Union Minister Giriraj Singh, LG hand over Nt'l Panchayat Awards to PRIs of J&K

Jammu: Union Minister of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Giriraj Singh and Lieutenant Governor, J&K, Manoj Sinha today handed over National Panchayat Awards to PRI members of J&K at Raj Bhavan.

The Union Minister and the Lt Governor congratulated the awardees and impressed upon them to continue their work as vital members of the grassroots democracy in J&K.

The PRI members received awards under different categories of the National Panchayat Awards 2022, which are Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (DDUPSP) for improving delivery of services and public goods; Nanaji Deshmukh

Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (NDRGGSP) for outstanding contribution to the socio-economic development by involving Gram Sabhas; Gram Panchayat Development Plan Award (GPDPA) for developing its GPDP on the model guidelines and Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award (CFGPA) for adopting child-friendly practices.

The Panchayats/Village Councils were evaluated for the work undertaken by them during the appraisal year 2020-21.

Safeena Beigh, DDC Chairperson Baramulla; Mir Iqbal, BDC Chairperson from Baramulla; Anju Sharma Sarpanch from Rajouri and Parveena Begum, Sar-

panch from Kupwara received Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (DDUPSP) under National Panchayat Awards-2022, while Romal Singh, Sarpanch from Doda received Gram Panchayat Development Plan Award (GPDPA), Khazir Mohd Mir, Sarpanch from Baramulla received Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award (CFGPA) and Zainab Jan, Sarpanch Kupwara received Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (NDRGGSP).

Mandeep Kaur, Administrative Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj; Mohammad Mumtaz Ali, Director Rural Development Jammu, besides other officers were present on the occasion.

J&K Bank signs MoU with Mahindra & Mahindra for affordable farm-equipment finance

Srinagar: J&K Bank has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Mahindra & Mahindra's Farm Equipment Sector (FES) – India's leading tractor maker- as its preferred financier across the country with special focus on J&K and Ladakh.

As per the agreement, J&K Bank will provide affordable and hassle-free financing facilities to prospective customers on Mahindra branded tractors and farm machinery at its business units particularly in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

Vice President Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat signed the agreement on behalf of J&K Bank while as the National Sales Head Sunil Johnson put in his signatures representing M&M-FES. The signing ceremony was held last week in presence of Bank's President Syed Rais Maqbool, AVP Suhail Ahmad Lone, M&M FES Head Dealer Working Capital Management, Tanmai Saksena, Zonal Retail Finance Manager Rajan Arora and other officials of the Bank.

Commenting on the collaboration, President Syed Rais Maqbool said, "In line with our customer-centric strategy, we have entered into

this tie-up with the country's leading Tractor and Farm Equipment Maker to enhance credit to the farm equipment sector thereby facilitating ease of farming for people belonging to agricultural sector. The agreement shall entitle our customers for appropriate discounts from M&M along with Bank's competitive rate of interest."

"I hope the agreement will enable both the Bank and M&M to leverage the inherent strengths of each other's brand and network of outlets across India with focus on J&K and Ladakh where we have 851 Business Units," he added.

In his remarks regarding the agreement, M&M's President – Farm Equipment Sector, Hemant Sikka said, "With access to credit as a major block for farmers in employing mechanization on their farmlands, we at Mahindra entered into the tie-up with J&K Bank to help farmers purchase the latest Mahindra farm equipment in the region. Through J&K Bank's wide network we also hope to offer improved access to affordable credit through innovative and attractive financing solutions that will help farmers acquire the latest farm equipment to boost their yields."



J&K witnessing a paradigm shift in growth trajectory: Govt

Srinagar: The most striking benchmark of public service and governance for any Administration is the timely completion of projects. It not just minimises the cost for the public exchequer but also strengthens the faith of citizens in the administration.

In J&K, after its transition into a Union Territory, an unprecedented improvement in the pace of development is being witnessed which led to greater transformation here.

The implementation of several path breaking central legislations after revocation of Art. 370, like Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forests Rights) Act, 2007, The Scheduled Caste and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1954, among others, is poised to herald a new era of progress and development in J&K.

Project Completion: Speed and Social Responsibility

With steep reduction in construction cost and fast tracking of work execution, project completion has been enhanced by almost three times in J&K. No wonder that the number of developmental projects being completed has leapfrogged from 9229 in 2018-19 to approximately 40,000 expected to be completed in 2021-22. Under PMGSY, J&K has ranked at fourth place at national level in terms of road length with 2353 PMGSY projects covering 16,448 km, connecting 2033 habitations completed since inception.

Till 15th of March 2022, 2480 PMGSY roads have been constructed resulting in blacktopping of 6625 km. The highest daily macadamisation, a stark shift from an average of 6.27 km/day during 2019-20 to an average of 21.92 km/day is being achieved during the current financial year, bears testimony to the speed, efficiency and quality of project completion in J&K.

Government has started several tunnel projects like Z-Morh Tunnel which is an under-construction tunnel, 20 km away from the Zojila Pass, on Srinagar-Kargil-Leh highway. The 6.5 km long tunnel will connect Gagangir directly to Sonamarg in Kashmir. Zojila Tunnel is another under-construction tunnel located to the north-east of Srinagar, on the Srinagar-Leh section of the NH 1 with a 14.2 km road tunnel between Baltal and Minamarg.

4 tunnels on Akhnoor – Poonch section of NH 144A will also be constructed. 10.30km Singhpora-Vailoo tunnel under Sinthan Pass on NH-244 has been approved and shall be completed at the earliest.

Smart Cities Mission: J&K's shift from Aspirational to Achiever

The capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar have been brought under the ambit of Smart Cities Mission with around 276 approved projects. Procurement and operationalization of approx. 200 e-Buses, creation of 2 Unified Metropolitan Transport Authorities (UMTAs), Light Metro Rail Transit System for Jammu and Srinagar, and several other projects are set to transform the quality of life and convenience for citizens in these cities. Smart Cities Mission along with AMRUT will transform the urban landscape of J&K. These centres of growth shall prove to be the true growth foci and induce the forward and backward linkages for multifaceted progress of the UT of J&K.

Rail Connectivity to Kashmir:

Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) Project, set to be completed by 2023, will link Kashmir with the rail network of the country. The ongoing progress on the Chenab railway bridge, set to be the highest in the world, Anji-Khad bridge, the first cable-stayed railway bridge in India, among several landmark tunnels and bridges being built under USBRL is a fitting tribute to the development journey that J&K has embarked upon. It will not be an exaggeration to state that the fusion of Emotional and Physical integration of Kashmir with the rest of the country is a watershed moment in the history of our UT and the nation.

Power Generation: Powering the dreams of 1.25 Cr residents of J&K

In the last 70 years, J&K has been able to harness only 3500 MW of power generation. Now the generation capacity is set to be doubled in 3 years and tripled in 7 years. Combined with the huge leap in power transmission capacity, with a 150% leap between 2019 to 2021, and reforms in power distribution, the goal of 'a light to every home' is not a distant dream anymore.

This paradigm shift in the growth trajectory of J&K is a result of several governance and institutional reforms coupled with historic devolution of powers to local bodies. Reinforcing the trust of masses in the capacity and efficiency of government institutions forms the cornerstone of J&K's growth story. Citizen Centric Governance and Accountability, discernible from these transformative changes, is an apt tribute to the epithet 'Badalta Jammu Kashmir'.

LG Invites Industry leaders to J&K for becoming partners in UT's unprecedented developmental journey

Mumbai: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today addressed the Indian Family Business Awards-2021, organised by Money Control, Network 18 Group, to recognize the significant role of Family Businesses in shaping the Indian economy.

Addressing the distinguished gathering of business leaders, the Lt Governor congratulated the award-winning family businesses and said that the award is a fitting tribute to traditional business families of the country, who have been serving as the backbone of India's prosperity. There is an emerging perception that the new generation with their dynamism will add to the growing economic success, he added.

"There are many examples of such business families who with humble beginnings, hard work and honest relations have laid the foundations of future enterprises and nurtured the country's economy. They are the pioneers of the Indian economy and were vital in providing stability and strength to the development of the country before and after economic liberalization", the Lt Governor said.

Today, if we are moving towards becoming a 5-Trillion Dollar Economy, it is also because of the traditional business houses which have contributed by shaping the Indian economy, creating employment, empowering the community and entrepreneurial spirit in the country, he added.

Expressing gratitude towards the Prime Minister, the Lt Governor said that he has rapidly renovated every sector of the Indian economy through various reforms since 2014. India has emerged as the economic superpower of the world in the last 8 years. Despite Covid pandemic and global instability, the International Monetary Fund has kept India's GDP growth projection at 8.2%, which is higher than many other big economies of the world.

Underscoring that rapid economic growth can be achieved only by accelerating reforms, the Lt Governor said that since Prime Minister took over the leadership in 2014, India's position in the Ease of Doing Business rankings has jumped from 140 to 63 due to relentless reforms introduced by Union government and the day is not far when we will figure in the top 50 countries.

Highlighting the key developments in Jammu Kashmir, the Lt Governor said that even after 70 years of Independence, the UT received only 17,000 crore in private investment as the immense potential of business remained buried under many regressive laws.

It was only due to Prime Minister's vision that after August 2019, infinite possibilities and unprecedented growth opportunities were unlocked in J&K, he added.

In January 2021, we had launched a new Central Sector Industrial Development Scheme of Rs 28,400 crore offering four types of incentives for the industrial sector. Against the expected proposals of Rs 15,000 to 20,000 crore, proposals worth Rs 53,000 crore have been received by the UT administration, out of which proposals worth Rs 38000 crore have already been approved, the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor further said that in order to facilitate the industries and manufacturing units, Land Use Policy was reformed in the UT and private industrial estates are also being promoted. 'With all 235 services made online for ease of doing business and 180 services made available on single window system. We have turned red tape into red carpet and we seek to build a more modern economic edifice', he added.

The Lt Governor said that tremendous progress has been made in upgrading infrastructure, connectivity and a host of incentives are available now for new investments. Infrastructure projects worth Rs one lakh crore are already ongoing in J&K.

For better power supply, six new hydro power projects are being set up, besides the supply chain has been strengthened and skilled manpower for Industry 4.0 technology is also being created in collaboration with IITs, NITs and Tata Technology for providing knowledge and human capital to the industries. Jammu and Kashmir has cheapest electricity, the lowest crime rate and is giving 400% more incentives as compared to other developed states/UTs, the Lt Governor observed.

Recently a delegation of 30 multinational companies came to J&K and at least 15 to 20 UAE companies are expected to invest in the UT. Dubai's Emaar group is going to develop a 500,000 sq ft shopping mall in Srinagar.

A group of businessmen from UAE had also met Hon'ble Prime Minister during his visit to J&K on April 24, which has infused new confidence and energy in the Union Territory, the Lt Governor added.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor also extended invites to Industry leaders to come to J&K for exploring business opportunities and becoming partners in UT's unprecedented developmental journey.



Quality private investment plays a significant role in upgrading educational ecosystem: Kansal



Jammu: “Private investment can contribute significantly in enhancing the quality of higher and technical education in J&K. The recent initiatives in the industrial policy of J&K welcome investments in higher and technical education. But higher learning institutes both private and public need to constantly upgrade their curricula to keep pace with the needs of a rapidly changing workplace. Initial placement is only the first step towards the larger scheme of work and students must continuously keep updating themselves to face the challenges of the real world”.

These remarks were made by the Principal Secretary Higher Education Department on his visit to the Model Institute of Engineering & Technology, MIET Jammu.

Kansal was the Chief Guest on the occasion of the placement day of the institute wherein over 350 final year engineering students who had received placement offers were interacting with the faculty, management and selected guests. Dr Renu Gupta, Chairperson MIER Group was the Guest of Honour.

Speaking on the occasion, Kansal stressed on the need to nurture skilled individuals in order to meet industry demands. Citing ‘unemployment paradox of India’, the Principal Secretary said that there is a huge gap in demand and supply of “workplace ready” skilled individuals whom companies are ready to hire. He also underlined the need to give quality education and skill training to the youth.

Industry 4.0 is here and a lot of existing jobs would be gone with it, while creating many other new jobs. Half of the jobs that

young participants of the workforce will perform in 2030 may be unknown today, said the Principal Secretary.

“Technology has made remote collaboration possible and has enabled talented people to get jobs from across the world. It is also causing massive shifts and unforeseen changes in the job market,” said the Principal Secretary. He urged young students to keep up to date with the latest from all over the world.

He advised the students to learn soft skills and called them indispensable for today’s jobs. He also stressed on the need to learn cooperation, and to develop problem solving and out-of-the-box thinking to be successful in all kinds of demanding jobs and careers.

Rohit Kansal advised the students to ‘not lose touch with humanity’ and to grow as empathetic individuals and patriotic citizens.

He applauded the students for securing placement in reputed companies from all over the country.

The Dean Training and Placements, Prof. B.C Sharma and Dr. Sahil Sawhney, General Manager Strategic Initiatives reported in the annual placement report that the Training and Placement Cell at Model Institute of Engineering and Technology reported its best placement season with 350+ offer letters for 2021-2022. In total over 120 companies hired 275 students with 70 students receiving more than 1 offer. The top recruiters included Infineon Technologies, Global-Sign, Amazon, Zenoti Analytics, TCS, Wipro Technologies, Planetspark etc.

Prof. Ankur Gupta, Director MIET welcomed the dignitaries and presented the placement report. He welcomed the spate of reforms underway in the Higher Education sector. He also highlighted the Performance Insight-360 quality analytics software developed at MIET which had been offered to eleven Govt. institutions in Jammu as a CSR activity from MIET.

Dr. Renu Gupta in her presidential address congratulated the selected students and wished them all the best for a bright future. She expressed satisfaction at the sustained growth and achievements of the faculty and students at MIET post the grant of Autonomous status to it.

The college management also gave a presentation on the achievements, academic facilities and infrastructure of the college. Discussion was also held on implementation of National Education Policy-2020.

‘70-year-old dream of Ek Vidhan, Ek Pradhan, Ek Nishan stands fulfilled’: LG at PM’s rally

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Sunday said that the UT’s “70-year-old dream of Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan, Ek Pradhan (one state, one flag, one premier) stands fulfilled today under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi”.

LG Sinha made the statement while addressing a rally in Palli area of Samba district after welcoming Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who landed in the district for a day’s visit to the region, news agency KNO

reported.

“It is for the first time that the entire India right from J&K to Kanyakumari has one flag and one leader, who is today in front of us,” Sinha said.

“For the first time, we are seeing a full-fledged three-tier Panchayati Raj system in place,” he said.

He said that post-1947 “only 15000 crore investment reached J&K while as of today, there are proposals worth Rs 52000 crore with

the J&K government of which Rs 38000 crore investment proposals are being inaugurated by the Prime Minister today”.

“In the next few years, we will achieve the target of Rs 70,000 crore investment and almost 7 to 8 lakh youth will get jobs,” LG Sinha said.

Speaking on the occasion, MoS in PMO Dr Jitendra Singh said: “under the leadership of PM Modi, people of J&K saw real self-rule flourishing in the UT and every segment is flourishing and people reaping peace dividends.”

Over 5.25 lakh Golden Cards issued in Srinagar



Srinagar: With an aim to cover all left out population of Srinagar District under Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana-SEHAT Scheme (AB-PMJAY-SEHAT), a meeting of Senior Health functionaries, FCS&CA officials and other concerned was held under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammed Aijaz Asad at DC Office Complex here to ensure effective registration of beneficiaries and generation of Golden Cards in the district.

Mission Director National Health Mission (NHM), who is also the CEO Ayushman Bharat, Mohammad Yaseen Chowdhary was also present in the meeting.

During the meeting, threadbare deliberations were held on present status and progress made with regard to implementation of AB-PMJAY-SEHAT in Srinagar district. The meeting also discussed in detail the modalities for speeding up the registration for SEHAT scheme and directions were passed on to all the concerned for mass mobilisation to ensure all left out population is covered under the scheme so that they are entitled to the benefits of Golden Card.

Expressing the concern over pace of registrations, the DC directed all the concerned to improve performance to saturate the process of registration of beneficiaries and generation of Golden Cards in Srinagar district. He also cautioned the concerned CSCs/VLEs to perform duties seriously or face de-registration for depriving people from getting benefits of Government schemes.

The DC directed all ZMOs, Tehsil Supplies Officers, Anganwari Supervisors and Tehsildars to put in extra efforts and ensure mobilization of left-out population within their respective jurisdictions so that people are entitled to get the benefit of having Golden Card in the need of hour that provides free of cost Universal Health Insurance Coverage up to Rs 5 lakh per family on a floater

basis in convergence with Central Government's Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).

While District Coordinator CSC was asked to ensure presence of adequate manpower (VLEs) at the sites at ZMO offices and Ration Depots to enrol remaining beneficiaries in the District.

The DC asked the VLEs to work with added zeal and dedication for achieving the set target.

The Tehsil Supplies Officers of FCS&CA were asked to inform Ration card holders about the benefits of having a Golden Card and were directed to ensure all ration card holders are covered under the scheme. Similarly, it was also decided that enrolment of beneficiaries will also be started at Anganwari level.

The DC asked the CMO Srinagar to ensure proper monitoring of the process at Health Centres and submit progress reports on a daily basis for onward updation of registration portal.

The CEO Ayushman Bharat, also spoke in the meeting and made several suggestions to ensure saturation of Golden cards in District Srinagar. He said appropriate mass mobilisation activities on mission mode will also be carried out for creating mass awareness in the district for speeding up registration process.

The meeting was informed that over 5.25 lakh Golden Cards have been issued in Srinagar District so far and the process of registration under the scheme is going on and remaining beneficiaries shall be brought under the coverage within the shortest possible time.

Besides, Additional District Development Commissioner, Zahoor Ahmad Mir, and Additional Deputy Commissioner, Fazlul Haseeb, the meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Srinagar, Chief Medical Officer Srinagar, Zonal Medical Officers, Tehsildars, District Officer Ayushman Bharat, District Coordinator CSC, All TSOs, VLEs and other concerned.

Centre approves Rs 4,526.12 crore investment for Kwar hydro power project in J&K

New Delhi: The government on Wednesday approved a proposal to invest Rs 4,526.12 crore for constructing the 540 MW Kwar hydroelectric project in Jammu & Kashmir.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, cleared the investment proposal for the project located on Chenab river in Kishtwar district of the Union Territory.

The project will be implemented by Chenab Valley Power Projects Private Ltd (CVPPPL), a joint venture company between NHPC and JKSPDC, with equity contribution of 51 percent and 49 percent respectively, according to an official statement.

The project shall generate 1,975.54 million units of power in a 90 percent dependable year.

Briefing the media, Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said the Cabinet has "approved construction of 540 Megawatt Kwar Hydro Electric project at a cost of Rs 4,526.12 crore".

The Centre will extend a grant of Rs 69.80 crore towards the cost of enabling infrastructure and also support the Union Territory by providing a grant of Rs 655.08 crore for equity contribution of JKSPDC (49 percent) in CVPPPL, the statement said.

NHPC will invest Rs 681.82 crore from its internal resources.

The project is to be commissioned within a span of 54 months. The project will result in direct and indirect employment for around 2,500 persons, the statement said.

With the project, the Union Territory will get free electricity worth around Rs 4,548.59 crore during its 40-year life cycle. J&K will also receive benefits to the tune of Rs 4,941.46 crore through water usage charges during the same period.

To make the project viable, J&K government will provide exemption of water usage charges for 10 years after commissioning, reimburse state's share of GST and give waiver of free power at the rate of two percent per year in a decremental manner.

Path-breaking initiatives making J&K powerhouse of sports: Govt



SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government is taking various initiatives to create world-class infrastructure and introducing new policies to make J&K a powerhouse of sports.

An official said that the Youth of J&K are immensely talented and deserve more opportunities and exposure to display their talent.

We are committed to extending all possible support to the local sportspersons who strive hard to make J&K and the nation proud in different sports disciplines, an official of J&K administration remarked.

“The J&K Government is taking ground-breaking initiatives for creating world-class infrastructure, implementing new policies to make J&K the Power House of sports,” he said.

The concerned department plans activities throughout the year while infrastructure work is already going on a massive scale. The sports policy is not merely focusing on activities like Cricket, Football but is now giving importance to popular activities like Volleyball, Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Water Sports and Winter Sports as well which were ignored in the past.

The development of sports infrastructure which started after the abrogation of Article 370 is bringing ground-breaking change to the sports arena of J&K.

Notably, Union Sports Minister, Kiren Rijju, e-inaugurated a multi-sports facility sports excellence centre at Hira Nagar dedicated to former Union Minister late Arun Jaitley. The centre is coming up at an allocated cost of Rs 200 Crore fund under the PMDP scheme for sports structure revamp. It will be the first of its kind sports facility in the Country which was a dream of the late Arun Jaitley.

In a major departure from the past, J&K Administration focuses on quality sports facilities and training not only in Srinagar and Jammu cities but across the UT. Earlier, focus was on the twin cities of Srinagar and Jammu. Every district is equipped with top-level Indoor Stadiums besides Outdoor stadiums are coming in every District and even at block levels, Panchayat levels. The J&K Govt wants to make a complete overhaul of the sports structure in J&K and provide sportspersons with all the facilities so that they can hone their skills.

The administration is also working to prepare the youth of J&K for big events like Asian Games and Olympics. Earlier J&K had no requisite infrastructure, training and coaches for bigger international events. UT administration is targeting those disciplines in which Olympic level athletes can be produced.

According to official figures, the medal tally of J&K at National level competitions in 2020-21 in 14 disciplines was 72 gold, 90 silver and 145 bronze medals. Skier Arif Khan who hails from a small village of Goiwara in Hajibal, Tangmarg in Kashmir valley has achieved the unique distinction of being India's sole representative at the Beijing Winter Olympics. He is also the first athlete from the country to win direct quota spots in two different Winter Olympics events.

It is worth mentioning that during the Khelo India Winter Games, the Union Sports Minister announced the centre of excellence for the Winter Games to be set up in Gulmarg. The centre is being established keeping in view the potential and environment of J&K in winter sports.

Pertinently, the first-ever sports policy has been notified and adopted for the promotion of sports in the Union Territory. Besides monetary incentives, it envisages the provision of government jobs for sportspersons who secure medals in national and international competitions. The policy document lays thrust on creating a vibrant incentivized sports ecosystem through strategic interventions for sports in the Union Territory. The basic canons of the policy are to ‘Scout’, ‘Engage’, ‘Facilitate’, and ‘Recognize’.

The sports policy reflects the concern and keenness of the current dispensation, led by LG, Manoj Sinha, towards encouraging sports at both rural and urban levels while ensuring the engagement of all.

The endeavour is to facilitate players of Jammu and Kashmir in getting ample sporting experience throughout the year besides extending opportunities for adequate exposure to youth outside the Union Territory.

'H&H DEPT KMR INITIATES WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY TO PROMOTE GI TAGGED CRAFTS'



Srinagar: The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom Kashmir has initiated a widespread publicity to promote the GI tagged crafts through print and digital media, moreover, all the major airports were used as a platform to spread awareness, far and wide.

“The results are evident as can be ascertained by the fact that 6500 Pashmina Shawls were GI labeled alone in the year 2021-22 against the labeling of 4500 Pashmina Shawls since the inception in year 2013-14 marking an exponential increase of 1156% over an average annual rate,” reads a communique issued by DIPR-JK.

“The Directorate has introduced the QR based labeling for Hand-Knot Carpets and the same mechanism has been extended to labeling of Pashmina Shawls thereby enabling the system to be in tune to the dynamic technological ecosystem. Just in the initial three months of labeling Hand-Knot Carpets, the department has received 1000 samples for GI labeling of which 710 have been successfully labeled and the rest are under process signaling a good response from the local concerned community,” reads the communique.

“The Directorate has envisaged to induct the tagging method to ascertain the goods are genuine handmade. A step in this direction is the introduction of Hologram based labeling for crafts like Copper, etc. while for others like Chain-Stitch, the QR based labeling would also be introduced in due course of time. This would in the long run safeguard the interests of the potential buyers and would be pivotal in curbing the counterfeit handicraft items,” it reads.

The communique further reads: “The Department of Handicrafts and Handloom is in a meticulous process of giving a renewed

thrust to use of GI tag for promotion of unique handicrafts products with high commercial potential in the global markets.”

“With this intent, a series of tireless campaigns have been conducted over the past one year to enhance the export opportunities in the sector. Having seven crafts already registered under GI, a new life has been infused in the process of registering products under GI during the last one year. Products like Namda, Shikara and Waguv are also under process of bringing under the ambit of GI tag. The Dossier in respect of these three crafts stands submitted with the Geographical Indications Registry,” reads the communique.

“As a home to extreme diversity, the Kashmir handicrafts have overshadowed all other handicrafts throughout the country. These handmade crafts depict our culture, their exclusive proprietary processes, unique key ingredients, and the enduring tradition that has been followed for centuries,” it reads.

“During the last year, people have come across advertisements proclaiming unique Geographical Indication (GI) tags of Kashmir Handicrafts. It is a unique way to encourage the local community and bring them their due respect,” the communique reads.

“At present, there are seven crafts from Kashmir which have been granted their respective GI tags. The GI tags have evolved over time to protect indigenous knowledge in the handicrafts sector to help localize economic control, promote rural socio-economic development and assure higher economic returns. The proponents of GI regard it as a strong tool for protecting property rights, offering new export opportunities in these sectors,” it added.

'Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani' ensuring transparency in maintenance, upkeep of land records: Govt

Srinagar: Correctly maintained up-to-date land records are basic tools of convenience, clarity and ownership with wider socio-economic ramifications. They not only help in formulation of policies, but also reduce land related litigations thereby maintaining the calm in social fabric.

Post 5th August 2019, Jammu & Kashmir has embarked on an unprecedented developmental trajectory wherein transformational initiatives in all sectors have been launched. Transparency in maintenance and upkeep of Land records was an area which required an urgent intervention. "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani" (AZAN) is a landmark intervention in this direction.

Earlier, there was no mechanism available for citizens to view or monitor the status of their revenue records online. They had to move from pillar-to-post to obtain even a copy of land records (Jamabandi or Khasra Girdwari). The opacity in the system encouraged and breded favouritism, redtapisim and corruption putting citizens at the mercy of the system and the scenario warranted an immediate intervention which could usher in transparency and accountability and this yearning gave birth to "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani" (AZAN).

"Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani" (AZAN): Land Records Information System was launched on October 22, 2021 by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha. Under this system, the Public users can now search and view copies of the Scanned data online on CIS Portal- <http://landrecords.jk.gov.in/>. In the words of Lt Governor, the initiative will facilitate easy online access to the Land Records System, thereby reducing manipulation of the Land Records and improving the efficiency of Revenue offices substantially.

This initiative is a part of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP). The Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) 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 offices/Tehsils more efficient and transparent. The programme aims to modernize management of land records, enhance transparency in the land records maintenance system, thus reducing scope of land/property disputes, and facilitate conclusive titles to immovable properties in the country.

The major components of the programme include computerization and digitization of land records, Survey/resurvey and updation of all survey and settlement records, Integration of property registration with land records and cadastral maps for enhancing authenticity and security of data, bringing utmost transparency in the system, Capacity building, and development of Land Records Information System.

As part of the program implementation in UT, 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. This mammoth task was accomplished in a systematic manner wherein, as per the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP) guidelines, Department of Revenue, Government of J&K created a Project Management Unit (PMU) under the guidance of Financial Commissioner, Revenue, J&K.

To address the land records Modernization programme and subsequent management of the records, the PMU was registered as Society and named as Jammu & Kashmir Land Records Management Agency (JaKLaRMA). The administrative and functional structure of the society is very comprehensive with inclusion of all

line departments, agencies and offices within the UT. The Society is chaired by Chief Secretary and Financial Commissioner Revenue, is the chief executive. This Society oversaw the task of scanning of revenue records and ensured that it was completed in a mission mode and in a time-bound manner.

Consequently, after its launch, the land records portal is now a one-stop destination for revenue records. Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani (Your Land, Your Sight) has ushered in an era of transparency and convenience for the citizens. They no longer need to visit the offices for obtaining information about their revenue record. They can simply view and download the information/record from the land records portal. More than 10.70 lakh citizens have already viewed the status of their land records on the portal with feedback to the department and this feedback of the citizens has resulted in purification and updation of land records. This transparency will further help in information driven policy formulation by the government.

Moreover, up-to-date land records will prevent avoidable litigations in the revenue courts which are presently burdened with numerous such cases throughout the UT.

In the series of transformational changes in the sector:

Jammu & Kashmir Agricultural Land (Conversion for non-agricultural purposes) Regulations, 2022 have been notified. As a result, Change in Land Use (CLU) process has been simplified. The applications for the same can now be filed online and disposal shall be within 30 days thereby promoting Ease of Living for the citizens.

Jammu and Kashmir Land Pass-Book Rules 2022 have also been notified major highlights of which are: online issuance of Land Pass-book in trilingual mode with verifiable QR Code, Unique Number for every Land Pass-Book. Land Pass Book carry the same evidentiary value as the certified copy of Record-of-Rights.

One of the beneficiaries of 'Aap Ki Zameen Aap Ki Nigrani' portal, Showkat Ahmad Masoodi of Kupwara town has expressed his gratitude towards the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha for launching different portals especially Aap Ki Zameen Aap Ki Nigrani for the welfare of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "In fact, the launch of the portal is a revolution in itself in the field of revenue records. I think I am the real owner of the land after I got access of this portal," said Showkat who is also Convener of the Civil Society Kupwara, adding that the time has gone now when people used to move from pillar to post to see Patwari or Girdawar for ascertaining a little Intikhab or Girdawari of his own land. He said the portal is more user friendly and all educated persons are taking advantage of this portal. He also appealed to all landowners to use the portal for their instant benefits. He thanked the LG government for keeping both offline and online modes available for the easy access of the people.

Further, Inderpal Gupta, an 80-year-old businessman from Sunderbani, Rajouri expressed his gratitude for the Lieutenant Governor. "One day while browsing social media, a video from the then Deputy Commissioner had popped up on my phone. It was about the usage of the landrecordsjk.gov.in portal. After registering on the portal, I was surprised to find all the revenue records which are required by an individual available on the portal," said Gupta.

"With this, I now don't have to move to Tehsil and Patwar-khana for my revenue records. All my revenue records are now available on my screen just a click away. The best thing about the portal is the grievance redressal mechanism. We are highly thankful to the LG for launching such revolutionary services and moving towards the dreams of Good Governance."





J&K emerging as top destination for foreign, domestic investments: Govt

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is set to become the top investment destination in the country as it races up to various infrastructure projects and is reaching out to foreign and domestic investors through several forums and industrial summits.

According to officials, investors from foreign countries particularly middle-east are keen to invest in J&K with an investment of many folds which Jammu and Kashmir has not received in the last 75 years.

Before arriving in Palli village in Samba to participate in the celebration of National Panchayati Raj Day celebrations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met a large delegation from UAE. The Prime Minister said that a new story of development is being written and many private investors are interested in Jammu and Kashmir. For seven decades of independence, private investment of only Rs 17 thousand crore could be made in Jammu and Kashmir. But, this investment is now reaching around Rs 38,000 crore.

The Lieutenant-Governor's administration in Jammu & Kashmir worked hard to convince Dubai-based investors to explore investment possibilities in the Union Territory. JSW Steel Ltd. and Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd. became the first major corporations to buy land for their projects after the reading down of Article 370 in 2019.

The possession of 70 kanals of land (8.75 acres) has already been handed over to JSW Steel Ltd. In Pulwama's Lassipora industrial area to set up a ₹150-crore steel plant.

Similarly, Apollo Hospitals is setting up a 250-bed super speciality hospital in the Jammu region. The administration has already earmarked 100 kanals (12.5 acres) at Jammu's Miran Sahib for a medi-city, which will accommodate the country's top health sector corporates to invest here.

In Kashmir, Medi-city is coming up on 368 kanals (46 acres) in Sempora of south Kashmir's Pulwama district as many groups have also shown equal interest to invest in the medi-city. The Administrative Council had approved the transfer of land measuring 750 Kanals in favour of the Industries & Commerce Department for setting up a Medicity.

The Operationalization of the Medicity will bring world-class health care infrastructure and facilities to the region, besides providing employment opportunities to the medical/pharma professionals, local pharmacists and vendors, SAC said in a statement.

An official of the Industries Department said that they are trying to bring in high tech investment, keeping the environment and people in mind.

"The UT administration is bridging three decades of lack of development. Jammu and Kashmir was never exploited the way it should have been for the larger good of people and the changes are visible on the ground," he said.

Unlike the past, the empowerment of J&K grassroots level workers was prioritised by the LG administration which received praise from the Prime Minister in his speech. The Prime Minister said that "celebration of National Panchayati Raj Day in Jammu and Kashmir marks a big change."

Prime Minister Modi expressed deep satisfaction and pride that democracy has made way to grass roots in Jammu and Kashmir. "Be it democracy or resolve for development, today Jammu and Kashmir is presenting a new example. In the last 2-3 years, new dimensions of development have been created in Jammu and Kashmir", the Prime Minister stressed.

Since the introduction of constitutional reforms in J&K in August 2019, the government has been focusing on bringing about wide-ranging reforms to substantially improve governance and enhance ease of living for the people of the region at an unprecedented pace besides domestic and foreign investment. The projects inaugurated and whose foundation stone was laid by PM Modi will go a long way in facilitating provision of basic amenities, ensuring ease of mobility and development of infrastructure in the region.

The Prime Minister inaugurated the Banihal Qazigund Road Tunnel, built at a cost of over Rs 3100 crore. The 8.45 Km long tunnel would reduce the road distance between Banihal and Qazigund by 16 km, and reduce journey time by around one and a half hours. The tunnel would help establish an all-weather connection between Jammu and Kashmir, and bring the two regions closer.

The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of three road packages of Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway, being built at a cost of over Rs. 7500 crore. They are for the construction of 4/6 lane access controlled Delhi-Katra-Amritsar Expressway from: Balsua on NH-44 to Gurha Baildaran, Hiranagar; GurhaBaildaran, Hiranagar to Jakh, Vijaypur; and Jakh, Vijaypur to Kunjwani, Jammu with spur connectivity to Jammu Airport.

The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone of the Ratle and Kwar Hydroelectric projects. The 850 MW Ratle Hydroelectric Project will be constructed on Chenab river in Kishtwar District at a cost of around Rs 5300 crore. The 540 MW Kwar Hydroelectric Project will also be built on Chenab river in Kishtwar District at a cost of over Rs. 4500 crore. Both the projects will help meet the power requirements of the region.

NEP-2020

KU to issue advance date-sheets for UG exams, single academic calendar from 2022-23

Srinagar: In a major step towards streamlining the academic and examination calendar and bringing the COVID ravaged academic system back on track, the University of Kashmir, has decided to issue advance date-sheets henceforth for various undergraduate programmes being offered at the University's affiliated colleges.

This new initiative has been conceived to bring the examination calendar back on track in the minimum possible time, and ensure timely completion of UG programmes and consequent award of degrees to the students without any delays.

The Controller of Examinations, University of Kashmir issued circular instructions to this effect. The advance preparation of the calendar would enable the holding of the respective examinations within the time frames prescribed and timely completion of various courses. It may be recalled that the delay in holding examinations in the past often led to courses being stretched beyond the prescribed timelines leading to loss of valuable academic time.

The present move comes days after the government decided to fully implement



the National Education Policy (NEP)-2020 from the current academic session and shift to a uniform academic calendar which will be synchronised with the national academic calendar. The Higher Education Department (HED) has already constituted a committee comprising Director Colleges, Dean Academic Affairs (DAA) of Jammu University, Kashmir University and Cluster University of Srinagar and Jammu to prepare a uniform calendar for J&K. The recommendations of the committee are expected this week. The new

academic calendar would ensure that no student is at disadvantage and is able to apply to any college across the country or overseas for graduate and post graduate studies seamlessly.

It may also be recalled that the University Grants Commission (UGC) has already issued draft guidelines for introduction of the Four Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) in accordance with NEP 2020 guidelines from the current academic session onwards. The final guidelines are expected within 2 weeks.

Explore possibilities of providing affordable, quality housing infrastructure in J&K: LG

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today chaired a pre-event consultation meeting for the forthcoming Real Estate Summit in Srinagar. This second Real Estate Summit of UT is likely to be held in August this year.

During the meeting, the Lt Governor asked the CREDAI and the concerned officers of the UT administration to explore all possibilities of providing affordable and quality housing infrastructure in J&K, an official communiqué issued after the meeting said.

"We are making a systematic effort to improve our cities and the growth has opened up unprecedented opportunities. The effective measures should be aimed at improving city services, creating robust urban infrastructure, and improving the system of public service delivery for quality living. Study the model of other cities to create affordable, inclusive, ecologically sustainable housing equipped with best essential basic services for the common man," the communiqué quoted LG as saying.

LG also directed the officials to make the entire consultation process participatory with a focus on infrastructure which is socially equitable.

During the meeting, Boman Irani, President-elect, CREDAI briefed the chair on the vision and mission of the organization which endeavors in transforming the landscape of real estate across the

country, said the communiqué.

He said that the main aim of CREDAI is to serve the people by acting as a bridge in order to provide the common man with good quality affordable housing.

Principal Secretary, H&UDD, gave a PowerPoint presentation on easing the regulatory framework, incentivizing the policy framework for real-estate developers. He also informed the chair about the progress on MoUs signed by the UT Government with private players and experts in various sectors including Films, Hospitality, Infrastructure development, etc.

Pertinently, the first-ever Real Estate Summit in J&K was held in the month of December last year at Jammu, and various MoUs were signed for the urban transformation of the UT.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary, H&UDD; Divisional Commissioners; Commissioners of JMC and SMC; Vice-Chairmen of Development Authorities of J&K, besides team from the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) including the members of its Elected Council, President and Vice Presidents, Office-bearers of LJK Economic Growth and Development Dialogue (LEAD) and Town Planning Consultants participated in the meeting, in person and through virtual mode, here at Civil Secretariat.

Govt hikes minimum wages of daily-wagers, casual labourers

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday approved a hike in minimum wages of the daily-wagers including the casual labourers, in all government departments from existing Rs 225 per day to Rs 300 per day as an interim measure till the minimum wage rates are revised by the Labour and Employment department.

The Labour and Employment department has intimated that the process shall be completed within 3 months, an official press release informed.

“Daily-wagers are playing a significant role in the development of UT with exemplary commitment and dedication to work. The interim measure has been taken to benefit a sizable portion of the workforce. We are firmly committed to ensure the welfare and well-being of all daily-wagers and the government will leave no stone unturned to establish principles of equality, welfare, and social justice in the governance,” the LG said.

It is pertinent to mention that the Labour and Employment department has prepared a comparative statement of minimum wages prevalent in other States/UTs of the country. As the process of notifying the minimum wages by the Labour and Employment department will take at least three months, a decision for interim measures was taken to benefit daily-wagers in all government departments and those of municipalities and local bodies, the press release informed.

“While we are fast-tracking the process on minimum wages, the interim measure reflects the UT administration’s concern to make growth and progress inclusive. Together we can confront the challenges of the future and there is no doubt daily-wagers and casual labourers will also carry forward the process of social and economic change,” LG said.



J&K Govt inks MoU with National Highways Logistics Management Limited



JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir Government today inked an MoU with National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) for the development of ropeway networks, as alternate solution of mobility, to improve connectivity to remote habitations on higher reaches.

The MoU was signed between Rohin Gupta; Regional Officer, NHAI, J&K and Manzoor Hussain, Development Commissioner (Works), PWD(R&B) J&K, at Raj Bhavan, in presence of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary J&K, and Giridhar Aramane, Secretary (Road Transport & Highways), GoI were also present.

Terming this much-awaited project as a potential solution to the existing mobility problem besides promoting tourism, the Lt Governor said that in the long run, this sustainable and environment friendly transport system, will play a significant role in decongesting the urban spaces.

The Lt Governor expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister and Minister of Road Transport and Highways, and said that as future mobility medium, the proposed ropeway project will bring economic prosperity to inaccessible hilly areas.

“It is a significant step in the direction of developing a comprehensive ropeway network to benefit all sections of the population living in remote and difficult geographical conditions of Jammu and Kashmir,” he added.

Terming connectivity as top priority to increase production, trade and to improve the quality of life of citizens, the Lt Governor reiterated the unwavering commitment of the UT Administration towards the rapid socio-economic development of the citizens living in the remote areas of Jammu Kashmir.

The Lt Governor said that J&K is witnessing massive up gradation of road networks. He observed that the ongoing infrastructure projects worth Rs 1 lakh crore will enable the unlocking of the true growth potential of Jammu Kashmir.

The Lt Governor assured full cooperation of the UT administration to National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) at every step for completing the projects in a time bound manner.

Principal Secretary PWD, J&K; Chairperson NHAI; Member, NHAI; CEO NHLML were also present during the signing of MoU.



OVER 8 LAKH STUDENTS IN J&K BENEFIT UNDER CENTRE'S MID-DAY MEAL SCHEME

Srinagar: More than eight lakh children of Jammu and Kashmir have benefitted from the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, the union territory administration said as it was on course to ease the life of its citizens through the efficient and optimal implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS).

“From the days of being under achievers to achieving front-runner status, the statistics reveal that the growing population is being significantly covered under the centrally sponsored schemes in J&K,” an official spokesman said.

The spokesman said the Mid-day Meal Scheme programme of the Government of India designed to better the nutritional standards of school-age children nationwide, over 8.30 lakh children have been benefited by this scheme across Jammu and Kashmir.

“Similarly, under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, a pioneering programme in the education sector of the country, 1,588 Information Communication Technology labs, 1423 Computer-aided Labs, 803 Vocational Labs have been established in J&K besides uniforms and textbooks worth Rs 67 crore were provided to 7.8 lakh children. The Scheme is a major catalyst to bridge the digital divide amongst students of various socio-economic and other geographical barriers,” he said.

Moreover, around 8.96 lakh beneficiaries were covered under Poshan Abhiyan, an overarching umbrella scheme to improve the nutritional outcomes for children, pregnant women and lactating mothers to prioritize the efforts of all stakeholders on a comprehensive package of intervention and services targeted on the first 1,000 days of a child's life.

To accord high priority to water conservation and its management, 54,304 Hectares have been covered under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).

The scheme has been formulated with the vision of extending the coverage of irrigation ‘Har Khet ko pani’ and improving water use efficiency ‘More crop per drop’ in a focused manner with end to end solution on source creation, distribution, management, field application and extension activities.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) a multidimensional programme, is providing

guaranteed wage employment, creating durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural households across the rural people here, he said.

Natural Resource Management and water conservation measures are changing the landscape of rural India. The livelihood thrust in MGNREGS has been brought in to raise incomes and improve skills for diversification of earning opportunities of poor households. According to the official documents 405.38 lakh person-days under the scheme were generated in 2021-22.

Jammu and Kashmir was declared the open defecation free (ODF) and launched the “Swachhta Hi Seva” – a fortnight-long cleanliness campaign for public awareness and involvement of the community. At the launch of the “Swachhta Hi Seva” campaign at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), J&K was self-declared as ODF.


With the sustained efforts of all the stakeholders, Jammu and Kashmir has achieved 100 per cent toilet coverage and became ODF “one year in advance”.

All the 22 districts, 4,171 gram panchayats and 7,565 villages in the state are self-declared ODF as per Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) SBM (G) guidelines.

An official said that apart from constructing 1.1 million individual household toilets (IHHLs) and 1,350 community sanitary complexes in J&K, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan has played a vital role in bringing about behavioural change in the people, the spokesman said.

Moreover, 105 projects were completed under Smart City Projects aimed at transforming Jammu and Srinagar into modern, sustainable and economically vibrant cities with a dedicated focus on improving infrastructure and services besides increasing mobility, he added.

The ambitious project, on completion, would strengthen urban infrastructure, improve city services, public aesthetics, ease of living, and provide a clean and sustainable environment besides enhance administrative machinery in both the capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar, the spokesman said.



Optimal implementation of CSS easing life of citizens across J&K

THE AMBITIOUS PROJECT, ON COMPLETION, WOULD STRENGTHEN URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE, IMPROVE CITY SERVICES, PUBLIC AESTHETICS, EASE OF LIVING, AND PROVIDE A CLEAN AND SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT BESIDES ENHANCING ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY IN BOTH THE CAPITAL CITIES OF JAMMU AND SRINAGAR.

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir Government is on the course to ease the life of its citizens through the efficient and optimal implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS).

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The ambitious project, on completion, would strengthen urban infrastructure, improve city services, public aesthetics, ease of living, and provide a clean and sustainable environment besides enhancing administrative machinery in both the capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar.

LG approves Rs 22,126.93 Cr District Capex Budget 2022-23 for equitable development of UT

Jammu: Government on Saturday approved Rs 22,126.93 Cr District Capex Budget 2022-23 — more than 75 percent since last year — for the equitable development of the UT, an official press release informed.

It said the “unprecedented” District Capex Budget for all 20 districts was approved during a high-level meeting, chaired by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha here at the Civil Secretariat.

Highlighting the key features of the District Capex Budget, the LG observed that the Plan has been finalized by adopting a bottom-up approach with active involvement of Panchayats, BDCs, and DDCs. The key objective of the District Plan is the empowerment of Panchayati Raj System and to strengthen grass-root level democracy through participatory management, he added.

In order to strengthen PRIs, Rs 1000 Cr has been allocated for Panchayats, Rs 200 Cr for DDCs and Rs 71.25 Cr for BDCs, the LG observed.

The LG further said that “it was with the active participation of PRIs, we were able to achieve a record-breaking milestone of completing 51,891 projects in the last financial year.

“These achievements are unprecedented and would not have been possible without dedication and teamwork of the PRIs, officials and other stakeholders. Timely completion of the target is key to transformation,” he added.

The LG observed that J&K administration has made ‘Jan Bhagidari’ (public participation) the cornerstone of the project planning and execution process. For the first time, after the detailed deliberations, a plan has been prepared with collective efforts of the PRIs and the administration, aptly reflecting the developmental

aspirations of our people, he said.

“Our aim is to make development a powerful people’s movement. We are working to ensure people belonging to the deprived section enjoy social justice, equality and the last man on the socio-economic ladder receives equal opportunity,” the LG said.

He called upon all stakeholders to maintain the highest standards of transparency and accountability in the implementation of the District Plan, besides focusing on key areas of youth engagement; upgrading the health infrastructure and patient-care system; improving quality of education; strengthening of basic amenities; timely implementation of R&B, RDD projects which will collectively result in raising the socio-economic status of our people.

It was informed that keeping in view the needs in the rural areas, Rs 10914.08 Cr under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), Rs 3814.42 Cr under MGNREGA, Rs 1529.59 Cr under PMAY-G, Rs 2001.12 Cr under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) and Rs 47.53 Cr under Border Area Development Programme (BADP), have been earmarked during 2022-23.

Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance department gave details of the district-wise Capex budget via a Powerpoint presentation and explained the components of the budgets for respective districts.

Allocation of Rs. 10914.08 Crore under Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)

3814.42 Crore earmarked under MGNREGA

1529.59 Crore under PMAY-G for rural housing

2001.12 Crore earmarked under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY)

CS dedicates 77 sports projects to youth



JAMMU: The Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta today e-inaugurated 77 projects completed under the Capex budget by the Youth Services and Sports Department, and dedicated the newly created assets to the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

The event was attended by Principal Secretary, Youth Services and Sports (YSS)

Department, Director Youth Services and Sports Department, Secretary, Jammu and Kashmir Sports Council, and other senior officers of the Department.

The sports related infrastructural projects have been completed at an estimated cost of Rs. 28.57 crore and include development of playfields, construction of sports halls, courts and buildings, and stadium illumination.

Some of the prominent projects among those inaugurated today are the synthetic lawn tennis court at M.A Stadium, Jammu; Yoga Wellness Centre & Yoga Park at M.A Stadium, Jammu; and installation of high mast lights at 6 sports stadiums for conducting day & night tournaments.

The unprecedented boost to sporting infrastructure is aimed at promoting sporting culture in the Union territory; proactively engaging youth in sports and fitness activities; and identifying the raw local talent for further training and transformation into international calibre athletes.

The Chief Secretary directed the Department to optimally utilize its infrastructure by organizing regular sports

activities across Jammu and Kashmir and purposefully engaging the youth in the Union territory. The Department was also asked to ensure the upkeep, maintenance and cleanliness at all sports stadiums and promote their usage by a greater number of players and athletes, besides, installing proper signage for easy identification and public awareness.

To further boost sports engagements for optimal utilization of these assets, Dr. Mehta directed the Sports Council to coordinate with the departments of Youth Services, School Education and Higher Education and promote engagements through regional tournaments and games on a regular basis.

Further, the Chief Secretary directed the Department to regularly monitor its asset utilization by analyzing the number of hours played, number of games/tournaments organized, and number of players/athletes engaged at each facility. It was asked to lay special focus on organizing talent hunts at block/district level and across all youth clubs.



J&K Govt promoting participatory governance, policymaking by building partnership with citizens

Srinagar: The J&K Government is building a strong partnership between citizens and the government for the promotion of participatory governance and policymaking, said a government official.

J&K administration is trying its best to strengthen the democratic system at the grassroots level; encouraging public participation in the development process; implementing principles of Good Governance; providing inclusive qualitative education to all; creating more livelihood opportunities for the youth, besides making all the public services easily accessible to the people of J&K.

The Awaam ki Awaaz initiative of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha is a novel initiative in J&K to address the grievances and issues of citizens as well as seeking suggestions of people for public welfare.

During the programme, the LG also highlights the progressive steps taken by the administration. The LG administration crafts a strategy to draft policies that are reflective of people's aspirations received on Awaam ki Awaaz.

Whatever we are creating, we must lay a solid foundation for a society full of self-dignity, self-respect, and prosperity. Working in this direction, the UT Government, in the last 16 months, has tried to establish a new transparent, accountable, people-centric governance system. Efforts have been made through active programs towards the empowerment of the general public, said the Lt Governor.

The Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor also launched Integrated Grievances Redressal and Monitoring System (JKIGRAMS) to create an interface with the public and focus on governance issues in the Union Territory. "It is a step towards gaining peoples' trust. JK-IGRAMS will be an effective grievance redressal mechanism, which is the life and blood of any good governance system," Sinha said after the launch.

According to official figures, 1,38,959 grievances have been registered since September 2020 and have been fully integrated with the Government of India's CPIGRAMS.

"The overall disposal rate is 97%. The disposal rate of Grievances increased from 52% to 97% since the inception of the LGs Mulaqat program in October 2020. 11 Mulaqat

programs have been held so far in which 226 cases have been heard by the LG and 157 cases stand resolved while the remaining are at advanced stages of resolution," an official said.

Notably, Jammu & Kashmir grievance system has been integrated with the Central Grievance Portal, thus making it the first Union Territory of India to have its district-level grievance offices integrated with the Central Government Portal of CPGRAMS (Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System).

In a significant effort to strengthen the governance mechanisms in Jammu & Kashmir, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in the Union Ministry of Personnel collaborated with the Union Territory Government of J&K to extend and establish Grievance Portal for online grievance redressal. The Jammu & Kashmir- Integrated Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (JK-IGRAMS) has been integrated with the offices of the District level in the Union Territory and also with the Central Portal.

Jammu and Kashmir administration launched three phases of Back to Village (B2V) programme. The "Phase-I of the B2V was an introductory and interactive programme to understand the people's grievances and demands, while Phase-II focused on the devolution of powers to panchayats and tried to understand how these panchayats are functioning and what are the grievances and demands. Phase-III has been designed in the format for grievance redressal.

The three pillars of the B2V were the redressal of public grievances (Jan Sunvaiyee), public service delivery (Adhikar Abhiyan) and the delivery of development at Gram Panchayat level (Unat Gram Abhiyan). More than 12000 senior officers were deployed in the Gram Panchayats.

With this unique initiative of B2V, over 20,000 developmental works were identified directly by the people, 7000 identified works are already being executed, 19645 loan cases have been disbursed with Rs 407 crs sanctioned for youth entrepreneurs. Block Diwas is being organized every Wednesday at Block and Sub-Divisional Headquarters to listen to the grievances of the public on a regular basis, official data reveals.



NEW LAND LAWS FOSTER INDUSTRIALIZATION, REVAMP AGRI SECTOR IN J&K

Srinagar: The new land laws introduced in Jammu and Kashmir replaced 11 Land Laws that existed in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, which reflected old regressive, intrinsically contradictory and outdated laws, with a set of modern, progressive and people friendly provisions.

The new land laws will not only afford protection to over 90% of the land in J&K from being alienated to outsiders but will also help revamp the agriculture sector, foster rapid industrialization, aid economic growth and create jobs in J&K.

The J&K Government, which is constantly working towards creating a modern, efficient, transparent and citizen friendly UT, has ensured protections and safeguards for the land after introduction of new land laws.

The new land laws are being hailed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir as a major step towards development and progress of J&K. The historic initiative of the government will revamp agriculture and allied sectors besides ensuring holistic development of all sectors.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, through an order on October 26, introduced amendments to 14 laws of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and repealed 12 others. Key amendments were made to four major state laws that governed the ownership, sale, and purchase of land in the erstwhile state. These are The J&K Development Act, 1970, The J&K Land Revenue Act, 1996, The Agrarian Reforms Act, 1976 and The J&K Land Grants Act, 1960.

The designation of land for industrial purposes will open up greater employment avenues for the youth who have always yearned for industrial revolution in J&K so that they can get better employment opportunities.

According to the new land law, agricultural land can only be sold to an agriculturist and he has been defined as a person who cultivates land personally in the UT. The term 'agriculture land' unambiguously is defined to include not just agriculture but horticulture and allied agro-activities as well. The most extensive definition includes not just horticulture but poultry, Animal Husbandry, fallow land etc also.

While progressive provisions of the repealed laws have been retained by including them in the modified Land Revenue Act, new provisions have been added to

modernize existing laws. There are provisions for setting up a Board of Revenue, Regional planning for regulating the use of land, alienation and conversion, land lease, consolidation and Contract Farming. The Board of Revenue comprising senior officers will not only be the Developing Authority for preparing regional plans but can notify a scheme of consolidation of landholdings and also a scheme for restricting and regulating the fragmentation of agricultural landholdings to make agriculture viable.

Last year in October, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that "not an inch of agricultural land" in Jammu and Kashmir has been given to anyone from outside the UT while addressing gatherings after launching the Apple festival 2021 at SKICC.

He assured the farmers that "no agricultural land has been given to any one from outside and to protect the land of Jammu and Kashmir is the responsibility of the government of Jammu and Kashmir".

One must speak with responsibility and it is a fact that not even an inch of land belonging to any farmer has been given to anyone from outside Jammu and Kashmir and even law states that agricultural land has to be protected. With due respect to this law, it is the responsibility of the Jammu and Kashmir government to safeguard the agricultural lands," LG maintained.

As a major initiative towards good governance and ease of convenience to the citizens, the Revenue Department started issuance of trilingual Land Passbooks in Hindi, Urdu and English to the landholders with effect from 19th of February 2022 from the districts of Jammu and Srinagar.

The land passbooks being issued to every landholder contain sentry from the Jamabandi in revenue estate so as to enable him to make its use for credit facilities and for other matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The land passbook prescribed by the Revenue Department is true to the record and can be generated online by landholders without visiting a Patwari or Tehsildar or any Revenue office.

With scanning and digitization of land records, already under implementation for convenience of citizens as part of the good governance initiative of the Government, the department in tune with the statute laid has also framed the Jammu and Kashmir Land Passbook Rules-2022 for online issuance of Land Passbook.

JKRLM creates 60k Self Help Groups with 5,02641 women beneficiaries

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir government led by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, has set in place an encouraging and conducive environment towards promoting women entrepreneurship culture in the UT with thousands of female entrepreneurs starting their business odyssey with a new vigour and vitality.

The enthused business women of the UT are climbing the ladder of success with support from UT administration in the form of numerous lucrative incentives under different schemes thus achieving highest echelons in the world of enterprise. The key initiatives launched by the administration for supporting women entrepreneurs, commensurate with their educational background and experience are proving tangible results. The government ensures that women rise as a beacon of enlightenment and become vital drivers in the developmental journey of Jammu and Kashmir.

National Rural Livelihoods Mission is being run in J&K as Jammu and Kashmir State Rural Livelihoods Mission (Umeed). The UMEED (JK Rural Livelihood Mission) is turning a wheel of transformation for women to become progressive and self-employed women entrepreneurs.

The Rural Livelihood Mission aims to reduce poverty in the state by building strong grassroots institutions for the poor, engaging them in gainful livelihood interventions and ensuring appreciable improvement in their income on a sustainable basis.

JKRLM has become a change driven movement in J&K with 60,000 Self Help Groups (SHGs) with 5,02641 women beneficiaries.

The official figures say that Rs 890.55 crore bank credit has been availed by SHGs promoted by Umeed JKRLM while Rs 273.88 crore capitalization has been availed by SHGs from JKRLM. It is quite encouraging and motivating that these SHGs have mobilized Rs 168.88 crore from their own savings.

Similarly, the Mission Youth programme of J&K government empowers youth as an important stakeholder in Participatory Good

Governance. Under the programme, 4239 Youth Clubs have been 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 changes in society.

The J&K Government had taken a firm step towards making the Youth a partner in the governance process and UT's development with creation of these 4239 Youth Clubs under Mission Youth in a record time. To give sufficient representation to women in these clubs, more than 8000 women are part of these clubs.

It is pertinent to mention that J&K government has also helped 6000 young women to become entrepreneurs who were selected at the Panchayat level.

Meanwhile, Mission Director, Jammu & Kashmir Rural livelihood Mission (JKRLM), Dr. Syed Sehrish Asgar, received the prestigious SKOCH award for her outstanding contribution towards economic development of rural women under the programme SAATH.

In recognition of the achievements of the JKRLM under the programme SAATH, the SKOCH Foundation has conferred the prestigious SKOCH Award upon JKRLM.

While interacting with beneficiaries from J&K under the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) Pragati and Saksham scholarship schemes, through virtual mode, LG Sinha said, "Collective efforts are yielding favourable results. During Kashmir University's convocation, there were 94 gold medalists in 2021, of which, 77 per cent, which is 66 were girls. Similarly, during the convocation of the Islamic University of Science and Technology, the majority of gold medalists were women which is a clear sign of women empowerment."

LG Sinha stressed on proper implementation of policies and the need to focus on skill training and re-skilling of women so that they have an equal share in future economic opportunities.



HEALTH & MEDICAL EDUCATION GETS RS 1484.72 CR IN NEW BUDGET

Jammu: In the recent budget, the Central Government has sanctioned an amount of Rs 1,484.72 crore for Health and Medical Education sector to be expended under Capital Expenditure for 2022-23.

Continuing the wheel of unprecedented development in health infrastructure, the Center government has allocated a whopping budget for the health sector which reflects the commitment and concern of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, towards growth and welfare of people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Some of the worth mentioning health infrastructure projects included two new AIIMS with a project cost of Rs 4000 crore one each at Jammu and Kashmir divisions, seven new Government Medical Colleges being established with a total outlay of Rs 1595 crore, ten new Nursing Colleges being set up with an approximate cost of Rs. 60 crore besides two State Cancer institutes worth Rs 240 crore, coming up one each at Jammu and Kashmir division.

Under AB PMJAY SEHAT scheme, universal health coverage scheme in convergence with Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) to provide free of cost insurance cover up to Rs 5 lakh per household per year is progressing smoothly. Nearly, 55.56 lakh beneficiaries have already been registered under the scheme while 1,592 medical packages, as approved under AB-PMJAY, are accessible to the beneficiaries of Jammu and Kashmir SEHAT scheme.

It is expected that the pace of coverage will further be accelerated during 2022-23 to achieve the set target with the objective to cover all the residents of Jammu and Kashmir under this insurance cover.

An action plan has been framed to bring down the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) to a single digit for which necessary provision has been earmarked under the National Health Mission (NHM) budget.

The government of Jammu and Kashmir intends to

start the first batch of MBBS classes in both the new Medical colleges at Handwara (Kupwara) and Udhampur during academic session 2022-23, thereby increasing the overall intake capacity to 1,300 MBBS seats in the Union Territory. For better patient management and reduction of referrals, availability of doctors and specialists in new Government Medical Colleges will be increased. All the remaining 7 Nursing colleges are targeted for completion during 2022-23.

Regarding COVID Management, Jammu and Kashmir has emerged as a model for the entire country in management of COVID 19 pandemic. With 100% vaccination of the eligible population, J&K has crossed the 20 million vaccine dose mark. The vaccination in respect of 15-17 age group has been started all across the Union Territory and 100% target will be achieved soon. Besides, Oxygen Generation Plants have increased by 87 with 90,300 Litres Per Minute (LPM) capacity addition. Also, two 500 bedded hospitals were set up by DRDO in Jammu and Srinagar to fight Covid-19 pandemic. The government of Jammu and Kashmir has introduced a "Saksham" scheme for the families who have lost their only breadwinner due to covid.

Under the scheme, a scholarship of Rs 20,000 per annum is being provided to school going children and Rs 40,000 per annum to college going students through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

Besides, Rs 1,000 per month to the surviving spouse and eldest dependent family member are also provided under the scheme.

The sincere and concerted efforts of the government of Jammu and Kashmir with the help of the central government has resulted in developing a strong public health infrastructure in the UT. Besides, the process of establishing world class health care facilities is going on at full pace which will change the face of the healthcare system across the Union Territory in coming years.

Promising future awaits J&K: LG

Jammu: Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said various new initiatives taken by the Jammu and Kashmir administration have given wings to common man's dreams and promising future awaits the Union Territory.

Sinha called upon the people to play their important role and complement the government's efforts toward building a developed and prosperous new Jammu and Kashmir.

"Various new initiatives have given wings to a common man's dreams. A promising future awaits Jammu & Kashmir," the LG said at this month's episode of the "Awaam ki Awaaz" radio programme.

The programme was aired on all local and primary channels of All India Radio (AIR) in the UT and broadcast on DD Kashir.

"We are committed to the welfare of the poor, the marginalized and the vulnerable sections of the society," he said, sharing the motivational and inspiring stories of the UT's change-makers, who are rendering selfless service to the society.

The LG also acknowledged and appreciated the invaluable suggestions and ideas received from the citizens and assured objective actions on the same.

Lauding the spirit of countless citizens who have dedicated themselves to the service of others, the LG made a special mention of Vaidya R.C Nagar from Udhampur.

He highlighted how the 98-year-old shines as a beacon of hope for the elderly by running an Ayurvedic Medicine, Yoga and Physiotherapy Center for his peers, besides establishing a Senior Citizen Home and a Bal Ashram for orphans.

Noting that the government is according the highest priority to senior citizens' care and wellbeing, the LG said that the UT administration has ensured dedicated Geriatric and Palliative Care facilities in all the districts.

"Also specific instructions have been issued to the Social Welfare Department to achieve saturation of benefits under old-age pension schemes and other welfare programs for our elderly," he said.

On the occasion, the LG also highlighted the impressive stories of Sunita Devi, Sadaf Yusuf and Mehak Sharma, who are driving great positive change and exuding confidence in the society with their immense contributions.

The LG conveyed his heartfelt appreciation to them and the countless other women who with their selfless service and strong will-power have achieved great strides in furthering peace, prosperity and social cooperation.

"Our daughter Sadaf Yusuf from Anantnag, who is an IT graduate is working for women empowerment and making efforts to improve the quality of life of the women folk belonging to the deprived sections of the society. During the Covid pandemic, Sadaf had selflessly served the women, elders and students through tele-counselling. In collaboration with the Social Welfare Department, she is working on health and hygiene awareness programmes in the remote areas of Anantnag," the Lt Governor said.

Mentioning about Sunita Devi, a resident of Balargi village of Rajouri, the LG observed that despite facing numerous challenges, she brought about a positive change in her life through UMEED Self Group and then went on to start a school for children from far-flung areas. Her efforts in arranging transportation for the children who are unable to attend school due to difficult topography deserve all the praise, the LG added.

Terming Mehak Sharma of Reasi's Shapanu village as an inspiration for the women of Jammu and Kashmir, the LG said that her novel efforts of setting up a flourishing dairy business have brought great change as it has encouraged other women from her village and nearby areas to replicate the idea.

The LG underlined the need to make continuous efforts towards women empowerment.

"The government through its policy reforms and intuitive hand holding schemes will usher in notable changes in the socio-economic and educational status of women in Jammu and Kashmir at a fast pace," he said.

He said his administration is determined to establish an egalitarian society where every citizen gets the benefits of the prosper-

ity of Jammu and Kashmir.

Referring to an insight received from Vikas Sharma of Ramnagar regarding the provision of toilet facilities on the highways, the LG noted that the suggestion accords well with our commitment to the construction of highway rest places and toilets.

While sharing another suggestion from Srinagar's Mehreen Altaf pertaining to the promotion and strengthening of Village and Cottage industries, the LG observed the Village and Cottage industries have been the backbone of the rural economy and highlighted the reforms introduced by the government for bringing a new revolution in the said sector.

The LG observed that the youths have been the focal point of UT's developmental agenda and Mission Youth and many new platforms of self-employment, empowerment are already helping youth to realize their true potential.

Sinha also mentioned about taking the Centre for District Youth Training & Empowerment (C-DYTE) to the block level to extend facilities for exam preparation, availability of necessary books, mentors, sports and physical training at these centres to the students so that more and more youths can prepare for competitive examinations.

Similarly, Youth Clubs have been established in all 4,290 Panchayats, acting as nerve centres of information flow among the youth, he added.

On the occasion, the LG also observed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is coming to Jammu Kashmir this month on the occasion of Panchayati Raj Day to share the resolve of the Government of India to establish 'Gram Swaraj' across the country.

"I hope that on this historic occasion, the peoples' representatives of all 4,290 Panchayats of Jammu and Kashmir and every citizen will reiterate their commitment to walk on the path of self-reliance, development and peace," he added.

The LG recalled that working with the vision of good governance and inclusive development of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, many steps have been taken in the last one-and-half years to increase the employment venues and income of the people in this sector.

Last year itself, the Karkhandar Scheme aimed at providing financial support and up-skilling of artisans was started which has given a lot of impetus to the rural and cottage industries related to handicrafts. Apart from this, various rural and cottage industries are also being promoted through Khadi Village Industries Commission, Khadi Village Industries Board and Rural Livelihood Mission.

In the last one year, 3254 projects were assisted by the Khadi Village Industries Commission, which directly provided employment to 26,281 people. Similarly, the Khadi Village Industries Board had worked on 8500 different projects in a year and about 46,000 people were directly benefitted by providing financial assistance of Rs 190 crore. In addition to this, the Directorate of Industries of Jammu, and Kashmir Divisions have extended financial assistance of Rs 131 crore to 6299 projects and about 15,000 people engaged in small businesses got direct benefits.

To summarize, the lives of 88,170 people have been positively affected by giving benefit of Rs 386 crore under just one scheme. Instructions have already been issued to set up clusters of rural and cottage industries under SFURTI, on which work is going on at a fast pace. So far, 08 clusters have been created in the UT, the LG added.

The LG also mentioned the suggestions received from Sourav Sharma from Samba, Aasief from Shopian, regarding Clean Campus, Safe Campus to prevent drug addiction and curtaining the spread of leaf miner pests respectively and conveyed his acknowledgment regarding immediate action on the issues.

Referring to the letter from Kulgam's Ehsaan Khaleeq highlighting the advantages of the recently announced pilot project of creating 'Special Women Cells' in 10 districts and calling for its extension to all the districts of UT, the LG called for collaborative efforts to end violence against women and linking all such special cells with self-help groups. He also assured relevant action about the plausible suggestion.



‘J&K FIGURES AMONG TOP FOUR STATES/UTS IN GDP GROWTH’

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir figures among the top four states/ Union Territories in the country in Gross Domestic State Product growth and achieved one of the highest growth rates in GST collections despite Covid pandemic slowdown.

The J&K Government realised the revenue collection of Rs 15217.17 crores in the year 2021-22 which is a 25.70 % growth rate as compared to Rs 12105.95 crs (17.02% growth rate) in 2020-21, Rs 10345.46 crs in 2019-20 (8.18 %) and Rs 9562.80 crs in 2018-19. The revenue has been realized from SGST/IGST/Compensation, Stamps, MST and Excise Collections across J&K.

The economy of other states witnessed a prolonged and severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; GST collections of many States across India went down while Jammu and Kashmir recorded 26 percent increase in the collections as compared to last year.

A senior officer of the Finance department said that hike in collections has happened because of a series of financial reforms introduced to bring fiscal discipline in the Union Territory. It was as a result of these reforms that the Union Territory was granted Rs 1.12 lakh crore worth budget for 2022-23 financial year as compared to Rs 1.8 lakh crore in the last fiscal year of 2021-22.

Reflecting the financial discipline, the official data says that in 2018-19, Rs 67,000 crore was spent on the execution of 9229 developmental works while in 2020-21, 21943 projects were completed by spending Rs 63,000 crore only. The work done was more than double while the cost incurred was Rs 4000 crore less.

In the financial year of 2021-22, there have been 30 percent less expenditure as compared to earlier while works completed were five times more, statistics of the Finance department reveal.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has attracted investments worth Rs 33,000 crore in the industries and service sector in the last year, which is double the investment of Rs 15,000 crore made since 1947.

The administration is expecting a possible in-

vestment of Rs 75,000 crore by the end of the calendar year 2022, which officials said is five times the investment that happened in the region in the last 75 years.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed financial transparency after major changes were brought in.

He added that even when the entire country including the Union Territory was hit by a pandemic and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) of many States recorded a decline, it went up by 26 percent in J&K.

“From many better States across the country, Jammu and Kashmir has shown extraordinary financial transparency,” Sinha said.

Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department, Atal Dulloo said the impressive tax revenue generated during 2021-22 indicates revival and recovery of the business and trade activities in the Union Territory.

He said proper tax planning, effective monitoring and efficient implementation of the tax statutes with initiatives aimed at bringing transparency and accountability in the system contributed towards scaling up the momentum of revenue collection in J&K.

Dulloo said the finance department has played a pivotal role in bringing the economy on the right track after the pandemic. “The treasury management was also remarkable in the previous financial year, and all the verified bills of contractors have been cleared and paid in a timely manner,” he said.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha hailed the Jammu and Kashmir Budget for the financial year 2022-23 and said that it will meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He also added that the main goal of the Budget for 2022-23 is the economic development of every region in the Union Territory. “The Budget for 2022-23 is going to meet the needs and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. This is a development-oriented budget and economic development of every region is the main goal of this Budget. This Budget is going to bring a change in J&K at a polemic pace,” Sinha remarked.

SMART CITIES MISSION

276 projects approved under Smart Cities Mission to transform Jmu, Sgr

Srinagar: Building cities that 'work' inclusive, healthy, resilient and sustainable requires intensive policy coordination and investment choices. National and local governments have an important role to play towards shaping the future of their development, to create opportunities for all.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration, keeping pace with national policies and programmes envisaging urban development, is initiating numerous measures towards accelerating growth and development of cities of the UT. The Smart City Projects are aimed at transforming Jammu and Srinagar into modern, sustainable and economically vibrant cities with a dedicated focus on improving infrastructure and services, increasing mobility.

The ambitious project, on completion, would strengthen urban infrastructure, improve city services, public aesthetics, ease of living, provide a clean and sustainable environment besides enhancing administrative machinery in both the capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar.

The Smart Cities Mission was launched by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, on June 25, 2015, for the development of 100 Smart Cities across the country. The Mission is an urban renewal and retrofitting program by the Government of India with the mission to develop smart cities across the country, making them citizen friendly and sustainable.

Under the Mission, an initiative aimed at driving economic growth and improving the quality of life of people, both the capital cities of Jammu and Kashmir were selected by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

According to the official figures, 276 magnificent projects of economic importance have been approved in twin cities to bring remarkable transformation and significantly improve the quality of life of people.

These projects include integrated Command and Control Centre, e-services, smart classrooms, smart toilets, smart meters, wifi zones, supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA), Geographic information system (GIS) for mapping assets, Intelligent Traffic Management system (ITMS), Green spaces, vertical gardens and heritage conservation etc.

J&K Government, through its continuous endeavours, is exploring all the possibilities to develop Jammu and Srinagar cities into world-class modern, sustainable and vibrant cities.

"These new initiatives are in line with our mission of making cities sensitive to the needs of citizens and our vision of evolving them through the use of modern IT & other interventions, enabling seamless information access and better service delivery. We need to adopt meaningful ways and means to cater to the ever-changing needs of citizens, to acknowledge the limits of available capacities, and strive dynamically to address the same," Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said.

Variable Message Displays (VMDs) would be put to use as a relevant and instant information dissemination tool to display information regarding government programs, schemes, awareness campaigns, information on traffic congestion conditions and alternate route diversions in case of high traffic; real time display of weather, temperature, air quality, etc.

VMDs would not only be a source of generating additional revenue for smart cities but the Variable Message Displays are strategically located on PAN city bases and have been integrated with ICCC platform, readable up to a distance of 150 metres. The control system is hosted on cloud to ensure 100% runtime besides surface Mounted Diode Technology for better visibility and IP67 Casing for all-weather operability.

The digital delivery of urban citizen services has been started to ease the process of availing the services of the government departments in twin cities. The services include a Building Permission System, issuance of Non Objection Certificate for commercial activities,



birth and death certificates and corrections.

The other services which can also be availed at the click of a button are the transfer of leasehold/freehold properties in Govt colonies, booking of parks/community halls/municipal premises, street vending/Rehari License, License for milk Dairy Farm, New sewerage/water connection besides registration of Pet Dog/Pet Clinic/Bird Trade/Pet Trade and road cutting permission.

To attract tourist footfall and benefit students as well as the business community, free Wi-Fi service would be installed at scores of locations under the Smart City Mission in Srinagar and Jammu.

Under Smart City Mission, the vision for Jammu city is "Transforming Jammu into a sustainable and economically vibrant city with focus on tourism, quality of life and trade by leveraging its heritage and location.

"City chowk multi-level parking, renovation of MA stadium, construction of musical fountain at Bagh e Bahu, improvement of street lighting by LED bulbs, multi-level parking at bus-stand, 100 bedded emergency block at GMC-Jammu, Jammu ropeway project are some notable projects completed under smart city mission in Jammu city, so far."

The building of the Tawi riverside, an ambitious project for the city of temples, marked a turning point for JSCL. The project will improve its overall appearance and provide new opportunities for tourism and economic development in Jammu city.

For Srinagar city, under Smart City Mission the government envisions transforming Srinagar into an eco-friendly, resilient and socio-economically vibrant city that celebrates its natural and cultural heritage creating harmony and opportunities for all.

Srinagar Smart City aspires to leverage its natural and cultural heritage and tourism through innovative and inclusive solutions, enhancing the quality of life for its citizens. EV charging stations, smart street lighting, multi-level parking, sports infrastructure (3 stadia and 5 schools), water transport system in Jhelum river, installation of ornamental LED lighting around Dal-lake, pedestrian walkways and footpath, riverbank development have been started under smart city mission in Srinagar.

The completion of work on Tawi Riverfront development project and Jhelum Riverfront development project modeled on the lines of Sabarmati waterfront will improve the aesthetics of both the cities.

For effective management of transport systems in the twin cities, the Intelligent Transport Management System (ITMS) would be operated and connected with the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) of Jammu Smart City Limited (JSCL) and Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) simultaneously. The ITMS usage would improve the mobility of people and goods, increase safety, reduce traffic congestion and manage incidents effectively.

Meanwhile, the first elevated light rail transit system has been approved to decongest the twin cities of Jammu and Srinagar under the Mission. The Jammu Light Rail System will have a 23 kilometre length with 22 stations between Bantalab and Bari Brahmana while Srinagar Light Rail System will have a 25 kilometre length.

25000 new seats added with start of 50 new colleges across J&K: Govt

Srinagar: With an aim to reform the educational ecosystem and infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir, the largest single addition of education capacity in 70 years was done with the addition of 25000 seats in 50 new colleges in one year only.

The present administration under Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha is creating one of the best infrastructures for higher education in the country.

“Two colleges of architecture and one engineering college were also established. IIT and IIM were established in record time,” official documents said.

Government is bringing reforms for the transformation of the education ecosystem by bridging the gaps and opening up opportunities for the younger generation.

The focus of the Government has been value-based education; creating an environment for individual growth apart from scientific and technological knowledge.

“We are working to create a perfect balance between students and teachers for shaping the young minds through a value-based knowledge system,” an official of the school education department said.

Speaking at a book launch of “Analysis of Accreditation Reports of Union Territories-Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh,” by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) during a function organised by NAAC in collaboration with the Central University of Kashmir (CUK), Lieutenant Governor (LG), Manoj Sinha said that the Universities and Colleges have immense power and a small shift in curriculum can have a decisive impact on the socio-economic environment.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that the world is heading towards an era that will be dominated by the knowledge economy, our biggest asset would be the human capital, a combination of talent, skill, and creativity.

“Our biggest and strongest asset has to be the human capital, a combination of talent, skill, and creativity,” Manoj Sinha, said. “The UT government is consistently reforming the educational system with new tools to produce required skill sets.”

The education sector in UT is being reformed to meet the requirements of the rapidly transforming education system and the changing market dynamics. The shift in the curriculum at University and Colleges can have a decisive impact on the socio-economic environment of J&K.

An official said that efforts are continuing to improve the courses in Universities and Colleges to create a conducive environment for learning and innovation with the aim to empower every student with technical and social skills to develop entrepreneurial thinking. Highlighting the need to introduce new reforms to meet the requirements of the rapidly transforming education system and the changing market dynamics, the Lieutenant Governor said, “The University and Colleges have immense power and a small shift in the curriculum can have a decisive impact on the socio-economic environment.”

With the implementation of National Education Policy (NEP)-2020, more than 2500 kindergartens were established and another 2000 are being established under the Capex Budget. 80,000 students are already enrolled in pre-pre-primary classes in 9000 Government primary schools.

Progress picks pace in 400 tribal villages under IVDS

Srinagar: With an aim to ensure focused development in tribal areas and fill infrastructure gaps, more than 70 government schemes were converged for implementation in 400 tribal villages under the domain of centrally sponsored Integrated Village Development Scheme (IVDS) for tribal development.

A special grant of Rs 98 crore was provided under Integrated Village Development Plan (IVDP) for filling the infrastructure gap in more than 400 tribal villages, apart from the village plan. The scheme is being implemented by the Tribal Affairs Department in coordination with the Rural Development Department and respective district administrations.

Every district formulated Integrated Village Development Plan for all villages having more than 500 tribal populations for addressing multidimensional aspects including water issues, infrastructure issues, agriculture issues, gender issues, health issues etc.

The PRIS along with officials identify various issues including lack of livelihood opportunities, absence of scientific livestock management, poor health care, and improper land use in every village taken up under IVDS. The IVDPs formulated by field teams in coordination with Gram Panchayats are approved by District Planning and Monitoring Committee headed by Deputy Commissioners having members from all line departments. The State Level apex committee headed by Chief Secretary approves the plans after screening and recommendation from the Tribal Affairs Department.

“The IVDS is focused on building rural capabilities and mechanisms and an end to end strategy which caters to the need for analysis and implementation of the project, along the lines of a participatory approach,” an official said.

The initiative is to create opportunities for gainful self-employment for rural families especially disadvantaged sections, ensuring sustainable livelihood, enriched environment, improved quality of

life and good human values. This is being achieved through development research, effective use of local resources, an extension of appropriate technologies and up gradation of skills and capabilities with community participation.

An official of the Tribal Affairs department said that plan formulation and village prioritisation was done on 55 different monitorable parameters in 14 different sectors. These included Health and Nutrition, Drinking Water and Sanitation, Education, Housing, Livelihood, Electric Supply, Road Connectivity, Mobile/Internet Connectivity, Farm and Non-Farm activities, Market Interventions, Skill and Entrepreneurship, Financial Inclusion, Social Security and Digitisation.

To train the key functionaries for better implementation of the scheme, the Tribal Department initiated training programmes for field functionaries involved in the formulation of Village Development Plans.

“More than 70 government schemes have been converged for implementation in selected tribal villages. This year’s annual plan is focused on key infrastructure development in health, education, livestock improvement, youth engagement and Skilling sectors for overall socio-economic development of tribal communities in J&K,” he said.

The government is continuously endeavouring to protect the interests of tribal people, including their land, education and upliftment of their socioeconomic status.

On September 13, Jammu and Kashmir government scripted a historic chapter with Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, handing over individual and community rights certificates to the beneficiaries of Gujjar, Bakarwal and Gaddi Sippi communities under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006.

The initiative was hailed as a significant step with the potential to transform the lives of members of tribal communities in the UT where the rights of forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers were recognized albeit to a long delay.

For providing education on modern lines to Tribal children, the UT government started an ambitious project of transforming 200 Schools into Smart Schools in Tribal areas at a cost of Rs 40 crore.

To ensure that Tribal youth excel in professional fields, 500 youth were selected for different professional courses with government aid.



‘DBT provides succour to millions of citizens during COVID-19 lockdown’

Jammu: Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) is a poverty reduction measure in which government subsidies and other benefits are given directly to the poor in their bank accounts instead of cash.

Similarly, financial Inclusion is a method of offering banking and financial services to individuals. It aims to include everybody in society by giving them basic financial services regardless of their income or savings. It focuses on providing financial solutions to the economically underprivileged.

The Government of Jammu & Kashmir intends to achieve 100% coverage under all individual beneficiary schemes, particularly under various scholarship schemes during 2022-23. Union Territory administration is committed to achieving 100% saturation in respect of all beneficiary oriented schemes, besides 100% Aadhar seeding. This year more than Rs 2,017 crore has been disbursed to more than 65 lakh beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) under various social security schemes.

During covid-19 pandemic some 2,72,465 beneficiaries have been added to extend benefits of social security over the past few years. Assistance of Rs.1,000 per month for four months has been provided to more than 1.66 lakh workers. Over 70,000 destitute, Slum Dwellers, Migrant Labourers were provided with ration.

Financial inclusion aims to build and maintain financial sustainability so that the less fortunate people have accessibility to the benefits as envisaged above. Aadhaar Payment Bridge (APB) System, one of the unique payment systems, uses Aadhaar number as a central key for electronically channelizing the government benefits and subsidies in the Aadhaar Enabled Bank Accounts (AEBA) of the intended beneficiaries.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the imposition of lockdown and social distancing norms, DBT emerged as a boon in providing succour and relief to millions of citizens whose livelihood was impacted. As the crisis loomed large, the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) team took up the challenge during this adversity, facilitating smooth functioning of the financial

machinery of the government.

The government of J&K has taken well calibrated steps to revive the economy post covid pandemic. The Economic Revival Package of Rs1,350 crore announced in September, 2020 has been well received and so far, Rs750 crore have been provided as 5% interest subvention in case of 3.44 Lakh account holders/ borrowers for 6 months. Aadhar seeding of ration cards has been achieved completely besides 99.60% Aadhar seeding at beneficiary level has been registered, which is targeted for 100% completion in 2022-23.

Under Atma-Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, 60736 borrowers have benefited under Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line -1 (GECL-1) involving Rs1,878 crore. Free rice was provided to 98,566 individual beneficiaries and pulses to 31,069 families. 289 borrowers have been benefited under business support loan involving Rs74.37 crore. Special credit facility for street vendors with an initial working capital of Rs.10,000 has been disbursed to 14,514 beneficiaries under PM-SVANidhi Scheme. Rs.5,841 crore has been disbursed to 8.27 Lakh Kisan Credit Card (Crop) account holders and Rs637 crore to 1.26 Lakh KCC-Animal Husbandry & Fisheries (AH&F) account holders. Under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) loan amounting to Rs.3,464 crore has been disbursed to 1,52,703 beneficiaries. While 23,434 loan cases involving Rs.407 crore for the youth identified during the “Back to Village” programme have been sanctioned. 19,645 youth have already been provided loans of Rs336.79 crore through banks for starting their own business ventures among which 6,679 women entrepreneurs are included.

The introduction of principles of financial prudence, transparency and zero tolerance to corruption have revolutionised the project implementation and enhanced financial inclusion and social equity. Several important reforms have been undertaken to ensure transparency and accountability in the administration. Today a fear-free, corruption-free system of governance has been established through a paperless, faceless procedural framework for the benefit of downtrodden.

347 prestigious sports infrastructure projects completed in J&K



“This year, 221 state-of-the-art playfields will be built in all 20 districts besides constructed and up gradation of 157 sports courts.”

SRINAGAR: Giving a huge impetus to the overall sports ecosystem across Jammu and Kashmir, the UT dispensation has completed 347 prestigious sports infrastructure projects out of a total of 1080 taken up under different schemes.

These projects would encourage sports participation among youth who possess immense sports potential with many players from the UT representing the country in different games at national and international level.

J&K, for the past few years, is witnessing implementation of a multitude of revolutionary sports development schemes giving a much needed fillip to the sector. The UT is being equally equipped with all requisite sports structure and latest technologically advanced utilities as other states of India. Recently, J&K sports persons have brought accolades to the UT by performing outstandingly excellent in various national and international tournaments.

According to official figures, the medal tally of J&K at National level competitions in 2020-21 in 14 disciplines was 72 gold, 90 silver and 145 bronze medals.

Acknowledging this sports potential of the UT, Prime Minister has sanctioned Rs 200 cr under the Prime Minister's Development Package for up-gradation of sports infrastructure and encouragement of budding talent in the field. The package, which was aimed at boosting sports infrastructure, training facilities and providing professional coaches, has brought a revolution in the sports sector of J&K.

“Indoor sports complexes have been built in every district to harness sports talent among all, especially rural youth. Playfields have been identified in 3525

panchayats to promote sporting activities at grassroots level besides ensuring flood-lighting and synthetic turfing in stadiums. J&K Govt has also created facilities of international standards in both Jammu and Srinagar regions,” an official of Youth Services and Sports department informed. For promotion of sports at the village level, each panchayat has been provided with sports kits during the Back to Village-3 as per the requirements, he added.

With a combination of world class facilities, coaches and continuous monitoring, Jammu and Kashmir has created an environment for empowerment, leadership and self esteem among the youngsters. Consistent mentoring and monitoring is being provided to the sportspersons and coaches are being provided with all resources to train sportspersons, an official said.

“World class sporting facilities are being raised, expert coaches and performance oriented staff has been deployed in sports training centres. Over 17 lakh youth participated in different sports activities while 1.26 lakh youth received coaching, so far,” informed the official.

J&K administration led by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, is devoted towards development of the overall sports atmosphere in the Union Territory. Special focus is being laid on providing the sportspersons of the UT with all the requisite facilities through a comprehensive sports mechanism in place.

Lieutenant Governor, addressing sportspersons, officials at the first ever national archery championship at M A stadium, said that resources are being expanded to completely transform the sporting ecosystem in the UT. He asked the officials to redouble

their efforts to quickly complete over 300 sports infrastructure projects being executed in all 20 districts.

“This year, 221 state-of-the-art playfields will be built in all 20 districts besides constructed and up gradation of 157 sports courts. A multi-purpose indoor sports hall with world-class facilities will be constructed in almost all districts by the end of this financial year,” he said.

In a path-breaking move to infuse sporting culture and achieve excellence in the field, the Jammu and Kashmir government is setting up a Khel Gaon' at Nagrota near Jammu.

Past few months had been a golden period for J&K with players like Arif, Bavleen, Shreya, Sadia, Danish winning medals for the UT.

Pertinently, the first ever sports policy has been notified and adopted for promotion of sports in the Union Territory. Besides monetary incentives, it envisages provision of government jobs for sportspersons who secure medals in national and international competitions. The policy document lays thrust on creating a vibrant incentivized sports ecosystem through strategic interventions for sports in the Union Territory. The basic canons of the policy are to 'Scout', 'Engage', 'Facilitate', and 'Recognize'

The sports policy reflects the concern and keenness of current dispensation, led by LG, Manoj Sinha, towards encouraging sports at both rural and urban level while ensuring the engagement of all.

The endeavour is to facilitate players of Jammu and Kashmir in getting ample sporting experience throughout the year besides extending opportunities for adequate exposure to youth outside the Union Territory.



Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Monday launched a dedicated portal of Mission Youth in collaboration with Vision India, to connect the youth of J&K with the industry.

The initiative aims to provide more than 10,000 job opportunities to the youth in 2022, he said.

According to an official press release, the dedicated portal – AVSAR – ‘Connect to Opportunities Initiative’ – has been provisioned to facilitate our youth with real-time information flow notifying students about pre-placement activities and job opportunities. All ITIs and other technical institutions in the UT will be on-boarded in the program for achieving the best outcomes for our enterprising youths.

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Speaking on the occasion, the LG said J&K Administration has taken many steps to create infrastructure, schemes and policies to speed up economic development, and to meet the aspirations of youth so they can contribute to society and achieve self-growth.

The easily accessible online platform would act as an interface between trained and skilled workforce and industry requirement in J&K, he added.

“Jammu and Kashmir administration is determined to provide quality education, skill training and better employment to the youth,” the LG said on the launch of online portal dedicated to connect youth with job opportunities.

The LG asked the CEO, Mission Youth to organize job fairs in Jammu and Srinagar to facilitate youth.

The LG said that keeping in view the industries to be set up in J&K under the New Industrial Scheme, special focus should be given on training of local youth to fulfill the needs of skilled workforce.

He further directed for conducting a survey and preparing a database of all the people who are to be connected with job opportunities.

Pertinently, acting as a bridge to connect youngsters with industry, Mission Youth under its AVSAR (Connect to Opportunities Initiative) has signed an MOU with Vision India for providing job opportunities to the youth of J&K. The program aims to connect various corporate, national and multi-national companies, with youth of J&K having skill and employability, the press release said.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, while speaking on the occasion termed the AVSAR initiative as historic and unprecedented. He complimented the team of Mission Youth led by Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, CEO Mission Youth, and impressed upon him to explore the possibility of connecting every employable youth with job opportunities.

Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary briefed the chair about the aims and targets set up under the AVSAR initiative of Mission Youth. He informed that placement cells would be established to facilitate the youth.

B K Singh, Principal Secretary School Education; Vivek Kumar, CEO, Vision India, besides officers of Mission Youth were present on the occasion, in person and through video conferencing.

LG calls for implementation of NEP-2020, provisions of the UGC Act & the Cluster Universities Act

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today chaired the 2nd University Council meeting of Cluster University of Jammu, here at Raj Bhavan.

The Council led by the Lt Governor discussed the important role that education has to play in the development process and transformation towards being a modern knowledge society, an official spokesman said in a statement issued after the meeting.

He said that the Lt Governor, who is the Chancellor of the University, sought a detailed report on the academic and allied activities, besides various measures taken for strengthening the academic and research environment in the University.

Laying special emphasis on capacity building, job oriented and skill development courses for the students, LG directed for concerted efforts to foster skilling of youth as per job market requirements and greater interaction between academia and industry, the spokesman said, adding, “he further said that assessment of existing courses must be carried out to create atmosphere of intellectual inquiry, innovation and inventiveness”.

The Lt Governor said that Universities across Jammu Kashmir must complement the efforts of government in transforming the economic landscape of UT by producing result-oriented research and called

for promoting excellence in teaching and extension activities, strengthening technical education, optimum utilization of University’s resources, and implementing NEP-2020 and provisions of the UGC Act and the Cluster Universities Act in the letter and spirit, said the spokesman.

“Speaking on the NEP-2020, the Lt Governor said that the National Education Policy-2020 would enable our children to become proficient in modern education as well as the values of our ancient traditions and culture,” the spokesman said, adding, LG also laid stress on the need to regularly identify new courses and carrying impact assessment of the on-going courses.

Among other decisions, the council approved the proposal for construction of Controller of Examinations Building (G+5) worth Rs 39 crore, said the spokesman.

Earlier, Prof. Bechan Lal, Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu, gave a detailed glimpse of various activities undertaken by the constituent colleges, programs offered, digital initiatives, extra-curricular activities for students and faculty besides, informing the chair about events organised under Azadi ka Amrit Mahostav and achievements of students in academic, co-curriculum and sports activities.

WITH HUGE INFLUX OF TOURISTS, J&K WITNESSING GOLDEN PERIOD: LG



Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing a golden period as 80 lakh tourists visited the Union Territory in the last few months, a record in the last 15 to 20 years, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said here on Saturday.

He also highlighted several initiatives of the government to boost tourism in Jammu and Kashmir.

“I think this is the golden period for Jammu and Kashmir in which all the records of the last 15-20 years have been broken. More than 80 lakh tourists arrived here in the last few months. This has brought prosperity and is helping people establish peace,” Sinha told reporters here.

The LG flagged off an event titled “Athwas”, a unique partnership between citizens and authorities for the rejuvenation of Dal Lake. Under the project, de-weeding and dredging of the waterbody will be carried out in collaboration with the citizens.

“Several activities are happening (on the tourism front), 3,500 shikaras row the lake each day and I think no activity can be bigger than that. Around 400-500 (tourists) arrive here every day. The number of flights has increased. For some, it is difficult to get a ticket to Srinagar just two-three days before (the travel date). Hotels are booked. We are thinking about having more hotels here,” Sinha said.

He said the Dal Lake has become cleaner and will be restored to its pristine glory soon.

“The people as well as the administration here have vowed to keep Dal Lake clean, which is the cultural and historical heritage of the city. People from all over the world want to visit the lake. The average citizen now feels that the lake has become cleaner than before.

“There are provisions for Rs 136 crore in the budget for cleaning the lake. Money had come before as well, but I do not think it was utilised as it is being done now. The lake has become better and the change is visible,” Sinha said.

The LG said that “for the first time in history, a successful campaign is being run with active public participation to clean Dal Lake.

“The de-weeding campaign which was started last year was very successful; now we will add new cleaning machines to the existing fleet and start dredging work on the western side to restore the 60,000 Sq metre area,” he added.

He added that money has been deposited through the DBT mode into the accounts of those cleaning the lake, which has led to a change in their economic and social lives and also ensured the cleaning of the lake on a war-footing.

About the recent fire incidents in which a few houseboats were gutted, the LG said a provision has been kept in the Smart City project to provide immediate relief in case of fire incidents in the lake.

On the Smart City project for Srinagar, he said the administration is working on the need to protect the city’s inheritance and also to provide modern amenities.

“When you will be able to ride a cycle along the banks of the Jhelum, sip coffee and enjoy free internet for half an hour, you will surely bring us sweets,” Sinha said.

On the conservation of Wullar Lake, the LG said that a walkway is proposed to be built along the lake which will enhance the beauty of Wullar and also help in preventing encroachment along it.

“Our aim is to revive the historical and cultural heritage of Jammu and Kashmir and the lakes here are an invaluable part of that heritage,” the LG underscored.

The LG said that with the inspiration and encouragement of the Prime Minister, people of the UT are determined to preserve the natural wealth of Jammu Kashmir.

The LG also said that for three decades, Khushal Sar had dried up and turned into a sewage dump, and it was only after the significant partnership of administration and people that this waterbody has been rejuvenated and returned to its original form.

“Hon’ble Prime Minister has also appreciated the efforts of the people of Srinagar and the district administration for the initiative,” he added.

“This year, we aim to revive 3600 water-bodies in different parts of the UT. I call upon all stakeholders, PRIs and departments to join hands with a resolve to save our natural wealth with collaborative efforts,” the LG said.

Earlier, the LG along with Mayor SMC, Junaid Azim Mattu; DDC chairman Srinagar, Aftab Malik; senior officers and volunteers participated in the Dal cleaning drive.

In his welcome address, Vice-Chairman, LCMA, Bashir Ahmad Bhat gave a brief introduction about the ATHWAS Dal cleaning drive.

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Dheeraj Gupta Principal Secretary HUDD; Pandurang K Pole, Div Com Kashmir; Vijay Kumar, IGP Kashmir; Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary Tourism; Mohammad Aijaz Assad, DC Srinagar, besides senior officers of LCMA and other departments, large number of students from various institutions of district Srinagar were present on the occasion.

80 lakh tourists visit J&K in past few months: LG Sinha

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Saturday said that Kashmir was witnessing a "golden period" on the Tourism front as 80 lakh tourists have visited the UT in the past few months alone, breaking all the records of past 20 years.

"Record number people are visiting Kashmir. This is a golden period on tourism front in the history of Kashmir and we should cash in on this period," he said. "In the past few months, 80 lakh tourists have visited Kashmir, which is record number ever if compared to past 10 to 20 years. Flight operations too have broken all previous records. Today all hotels are booked in advance and people of other States of India are finding it difficult to get an air-ticket for Srinagar."

Replying to a query about tourism related activities, he said on an average, 3500 Shikaras row in the Dal Lake. He said that government is committed to ensure the lake is cleaned on fast-track basis.

He said that the administration led by him is committed to preserve and restore the lost glory of world famous Dal Lake in Srinagar as the administration was working with the local citizens to clean the lake from weeds and other pollutants.

"This is for the first time that government along the locals is cleaning Dal Lake. People and the locals of Srinagar are on the same page and under a pledge to see the Dal Lake clean from weeds and other pollutants," the LG said as per news agency—Kashmir News

Observer (KNO) on the sidelines of flagging off an event titled 'Athwas', a unique partnership between citizens and authorities for rejuvenation of Dal Lake. Under the project, de-weeding and dredging will be conducted in collaboration with the citizens.

He said that in past many decades, Dal Lake was never as clean as it is at present. "Credit goes the administration as well as the people," he said. "Director Beneficiary Transfer (DBT) mode has helped a lot to ensure cleaning of lake on war-footing besides changing the lives of those cleaning the Lake. Today you can see Char-Chinar from a distance and in the days ahead, you will see how clean the lake will be. I think for the first time in the past 150 years, Dal Lake looks so clean."

He said that Centre has allocated Rs 273 crores for the preservation of Dal and Nigeen lakes in the budget 2022-2023 of which Rs 136 crores will be utilized for the conservation of Dal Lake alone.

"You will soon see that Lake back to its pristine glory for which it was once popular across the globe," the LG said.

About a question about Smart City, he said not enough being done to make Srinagar smart. "We are working on that path of making the city as smart. When you will have a cycle ride on the foreshore while enjoying the free internet for half-an-hour, you will surely bring sweets to us," the LG said.

Budget 2022-23: 'Rs 200 crore allocated for Forest &

Srinagar: An allocation of about Rs 200.76 crore has been made for Forest, Ecology and Environment Sector under Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) for the year 2022-23 which is Rs 9.01 crore more than the previous year's budget allocation.

Jammu and Kashmir has 20,194 sq km of forest area which is 47.80% of its geographical area with 55% forest and tree cover and 43% open forest. Besides, having the maximum number of forest types, J&K also has the highest biodiversity of herbs in the country. Economically, the forests in Jammu and Kashmir generate 2 million man-days of employment and has a monetary value equivalent to Rs 1.93 lakh crore.

The 'Har Gaon Hariyali' program in consonance with the vision of 'Green Jammu and Kashmir' drive is to ensure sustainable development and promote climate justice which will help increase the Carbon Stock especially in villages located near degraded forests.

1.35 crore plantations are targeted during 2022-23, out of which 26.50 lakh plants will be planted with active involvement of Village Panchayat Plantation Committees (VPPCs) to create green assets in Gram Panchayats. To ensure widespread people's participation in government-sponsored plantation drives, the government will adopt a multi-disciplinary convergence model linking school-level eco clubs, Village Panchayat Plantation Committees and MGNREGA works to various plantation



and protection drives.

The biggest achievement under Har Gaon Hariyali is that a massive convergence programme is taking place by dovetailing funds under MG-NREGA and the afforestation programme of the forest department. Under low-cost mode of greening and increasing the forest and tree cover, more than 50 lakh seeds/grass-slips are likely to be planted during the year 2022-23.

Under "One Beat Guard One Village" programme, 1500 villages will be taken up for greening of lands outside forests in 2022-23 by providing free saplings, seeds balls and grass slips to Village Panchayats for planting on village common land, kah-charai and other wastelands.

It is a low-cost innovative method of greening with the involvement of all the stakeholders especially Panchayats, BMCs, JFMs, NGOs and other social and government institutions and departments.

This is objectively taken in practice by the involvement of local communities and their local governing institutions to envisage and cover villages under low-cost greening interventions.

One Beat Guard is responsible to achieve the desired and well-planned goal and shall cover one revenue village in achieving his objectives of greening that area and all his or her efforts and operations shall carry out with the collaboration and coordination of respective Village Panchayats/BMCs etc and should monitor same for next 3 to 5 years.

As an effort for conservation and promotion of Chinar, more than 20,000 Chinar trees will be planted in 2022-23. A non-motorable walkway is also proposed to be developed around Wular lake which will add scenic beauty to the water body and help in preventing encroachment.

Center allocates Rs 786 cr budget for Jammu and Kashmir tourism

Srinagar: “Sustained campaigns by the Tourism department coupled with other revolutionary measures towards tourism promotion in Jammu and Kashmir lured about 80 lakh tourists through the UT to enjoy its scenic splendour and grandeur, from October to March 2022,” reads a communique issued by DIPR-JK.

The UT is witnessing a steep rise in tourist influx to the picturesque world famous destination of the country due to various remarkable initiatives launched by the department under the guidance of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, to offer the tourists a wide range of attractions.

The Union government is supplementing the efforts of J&K tourism department with all the resources and necessary support. ‘Liberal funding of a record budget allocation of Rs 786 crore, Rs 509 crore higher than last budgetary allocation, speaks volumes of the Union government’s keenness to boost tourism infrastructure and related services in Jammu and Kashmir.’

To offer tourists a peep into the hospitality of people, unique culture, traditions of the countryside in J&K, Manoj Sinha launched J&K Tourist Village Network initiative to transform 75 villages of Jammu and Kashmir known for historical, picturesque beauty and cultural significance into tourist villages. The youth-led sustainable tourism initiative is also aimed to strengthen the rural economy and community entrepreneurship besides empowering youth and women by providing direct and indirect employment opportunities.

These 75 offbeat locations will provide the experience of nature’s wilderness to adventure seekers, trekkers and tourists and will also create a livelihood in the villages on forest environs through home-stays, nature guides, trek operators besides food stalls and forest souvenirs, an official said.

The Union Territory government is adopting best practices recognizing the uniqueness of each village and showcasing the landscapes, indigenous knowledge systems, cultural diversity and heritage, local values and traditions besides encouraging film shooting, offering financial incentives as well as ensuring a digital platform to all these villages.

Amid the tourist influx, the Srinagar International Airport has registered record flight operations. For example, on March 28, Srinagar airport operated 90 incoming and outgoing flights which ferried more than 15,014 visitors making it the busiest day in the airport’s history.

“Passenger footfall at Srinagar airport in December 2021 was 3,24,415 and so Jammu airport recorded the highest footfall,” a senior official of the tourism department said. “The Jammu airport, one of the critical airports in the country, has an 8,000ft-long runway operational which will be instrumental in the development of Jammu and Kashmir.”

The Srinagar- Sharjah direct flight was flagged off by Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, on October 23 last year to boost trade and tourism in J&K, has been a hit among international tourists and domestic tourists who add J&K to their Dubai itinerary.

It is pertinent to mention that LG Manoj Sinha highlighted the scope for cooperation between Jammu and Kashmir with the 34-member delegation of businessmen from UAE, Hong Kong and other GCC countries, which was on a four-day visit to the UT to explore investment opportunities, during Gulf Business Summit in Srinagar held to make ‘paradise on earth’ the most beautiful investment destination in the world.

“We promise to provide global standard end-to-end facilities for the businesses, skilled workforce, transparent and hassle-free regulatory mechanism and creation of necessary infrastructure wherever required,” Sinha said.

Under the smart city project, 20 religious sites in Srinagar have been 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 government of Jammu and Kashmir in collaboration with the 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 the tourism potential of Jammu city.

In a significant move, the Jammu and Kashmir government launched a new film policy to boost tourism and investment in the union territory. The policy envisaged the setting of the Jammu and Kashmir film development council (JKFDC). The policy strives to create nationally competitive infrastructure in Jammu & Kashmir. It assures administrative assistance to ease filmmaking in the UT by setting up Single Window Cell to grant permission for shooting films, preferably within 2 to 4 weeks. The Indian film industry is rekindling its romance with Kashmir, a destination once a favorite of filmmakers and the audience alike. Soon, the Valley witnessed the cameras set on its blooming tulips, placid lakes, coniferous trees and the Dal Lake.

Also, Kashmir’s iconic Tulip Garden, one of the biggest in Asia where 1.5 million flowers are in bloom, witnessed an all-time high number of arrivals of visitors, locals as well as domestic tourists, this year since it was opened to the public in 2007.

Meanwhile, the Tulip garden at Sanasar in Ramban district, spread over 40 Kanal of land, set against the backdrop of picturesque hills marks the beginning of a new tourist season in Jammu region.



UNION BUDGET

BUDGET 2022-23: '312 cr allocated to promote youth related activities in J&K'

Jammu: The Budget of 2022-23 allocated a capital expenditure of Rs 312.57 crore for the youth related activities in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

It includes Youth Empowerment, Employment, Entrepreneurship, Skill Development and Sports Activities as this year's allocation is Rs.19.72 crore more than the previous year's budget allocation.

Youth Empowerment, Employment and Entrepreneurship:

To empower and provide self-employment opportunities to youth, Rs 200 crore have been provisioned under "Mission Youth Programme" under which job fairs will be conducted for facilitating jobs in the private sector and training to be imported to build entrepreneurship capacities for self-employment.

More youth will be covered under MUDRA/GECL and other financial inclusion schemes through bank finance for raising their own livelihood. The basic purpose is to attain development in an inclusive and sustainable manner by supporting and promoting partner institutions and creating an ecosystem of growth for the micro enterprises sector. As a self-employment measure under Youth Start-up/ Seed Capital/Women Employment Programme, Rs. 60 crore have been provisioned. Adequate provision has been kept for establishing Incubation/Innovation centres.

Employment/job portal at par with National Career Service (NCS) portal will be developed for providing a single platform for employer and job seekers. The portal will work towards bridging the gap between jobseekers and employers, candidates seeking training and career guidance, agencies providing training and career counselling, besides financial support will be provided to youth for undertaking self-employment and Overseas Employment Corporation will be revitalized.

Skill Development:

Skill Development aims to provide quality education and training programmes in specific areas of Engineering, Technology and Management through formal and non-formal modes of delivery. It coordinates the efforts and Policies regarding Skill Development of the state empowering all in-

dividuals especially the youth of J&K through improved skills and knowledge, to gain access to decent employment. It thus strengthens the economy of the state as well as fight with the problem of unemployment. In the new budget, construction of hostel blocks in different Government Polytechnic Colleges for providing better residential facilities to students will be taken during 2022-23.

Construction of workshop blocks/classrooms in different Government Industrial Training Institutes for creation of infrastructure facilities for trainees will be taken in 2022-23.

Sports initiatives:

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 Government of Jammu & Kashmir is laying the main focus on sports activities for the engagement of youth. Over 17 lakh youth participated in diverse sports activities and 1.26 lakh youth received coaching in different sports activities.

National Events in 17 Sports disciplines will be hosted for providing exposure to the talented athletes and interaction with the reputed players of the country.

Special programme will be initiated for the involvement of mass youth in sports activities with a target of 7.50 lakh participants in different sports disciplines. National Level competitions will be hosted in Badminton, Volleyball, Soft Tennis, Handball, Thang-Ta, Kayaking & Canoeing, Baseball and Gymnastics. Snow & Ice based Sports Competitions through respective sports associations will be held at Gulmarg & Pahalgam. 221 playfields/ playgrounds will be constructed in all the 20 districts. 157, Sports court constructions/upgradation of stadiums/buildings will be taken during 2022-23.

LG URGES SPORTS FEDERATIONS IN J&K TO DRAW STRATEGIC SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR SPECIALLY-ABLED SPORTSPERSONS

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday attended the National Health Festival for Divyangjan, organized by Special Olympics Bharat J&K, to honour specially-abled sportspersons at the Jammu University.

The programme is being organized on World Health Day in connection with “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” in 75 cities of India marking the 75 years of independence, by Special Olympics Bharat, a sports organization accredited with International Federation of Sports, an official press release informed.

Speaking on the occasion, the LG saluted the dedication and spirit of the special athletes. He observed that a good beginning has been made in the UT through a new Sports Policy, which focuses on sporting facilities and welfare of specially-abled.

Terming them as true role models for the younger generation, the LG said that specially-abled sportspersons have kindled hopes by their remarkable performance in International events.

“I urge sports federations and all other sports bodies in J&K to draw up a strategic sports development plan for the Divyangjan (specially-abled),” he added.

All schools and panchayats have been mandated to create sports infrastructure facilities to popularize a robust sports culture among the masses, especially among children and the youth, the LG said.

He observed that “under the leadership of the PM Narendra Modi, Divyangjan have been granted their due rights to live a dignified and virtuous life.”

“Before 2015, all the laws in our country were aimed at somehow connecting the specially-abled people with the programs of social welfare. A new social consciousness emerged after 2015 wherein focus shifted to bestowing Divyangjan their due rights and not just benefits under social welfare measures. During the same time, ‘Accessible India Campaign’ turned into a mass movement creating accessible infrastructure for specially-abled, in government and private buildings, railway stations, airports, schools and colleges,” the LG noted.

Highlighting the work being done keeping in mind the needs and aspirations of all the sections of the society, the LG said the UT

of J&K is moving forward in the direction of positive progress with the spirit of strong service nurtured by national values and public consciousness.

“Jammu and Kashmir government is working on a mission mode to ensure 100 percent saturation of Divyangjan pensions and distribution of tricycles,” he added.

The LG also lauded Special Olympics Bharat, its chairperson Dr. Mallika Nadda and everyone associated with it for providing much-needed platforms to the specially-abled to showcase their talent.

The LG also extended his best wishes to the Special Athlete Paramjeet Singh, who hails from a border village and despite facing many hardships managed to secure selection for the next year’s Special World Winter Games to be held in Kazan, Russia.

“It is the responsibility of Jammu and Kashmir administration to develop a flourishing sports culture among the specially-abled, identify their talent, and provide the world stage to special athletes,” the LG said.

“Our endeavor is to develop sports infrastructure, provide world-class coaching, and incentivize sporting talent with special emphasis on specially-abled sportspersons; creating an inclusive and equitable sports ecosystem without any discrimination,” he added.

The LG assured every possible support of the UT government to those organizations which are working towards the welfare of the sports persons with special abilities.

“In the last one year, the Jammu and Kashmir administration has ensured that every panchayat is provided with a playfield and sports kits. Under a special program, efforts are being made to connect 7.5 lakh youth with different disciplines of sports. This year, 221 playfields will be constructed in all 20 districts, besides construction/upgradation of 157 sports courts will be completed,” the LG informed.

Dr Ashwani Jotra, president Special Olympics Bharat, J&K UT while speaking on the occasion briefed about the various initiatives and year long programs being organized for athletes with intellectual disabilities, special needs.



2022 to be the year of academic excellence: Kansal

Srinagar: The Higher education department should strive to make the current year the year of academic excellence.

This was expressed by the Principal Secretary, Higher Education Department, Rohit Kansal. He was chairing a review meeting with principals of Degree Colleges of Kashmir division at Government College for Women, M A road, Srinagar.

Special Secretary Higher Education Department, Rakesh Badyal, Director Colleges, Professor Yasmeen Ashai, Nodal Principal, Kashmir division colleges, Dr. Khurshid Ahmad Khan and Principals of all degree colleges of Kashmir Division attended the meeting.

Speaking on the occasion, the Principal Secretary shared his vision of giving a fillip to the higher education sector of J&K. He listed out the priority areas including academics, research, innovation and collaboration to improve quality of education in colleges.

Referring to the relevance and importance of New Education Policy 2020, the Principal Secretary instructed the principals to ensure its implementation in letter and spirit. He added that in the spirit of the NEP, the colleges should strive towards quality and employability. He also informed that while admissions for the current session would be shortly initiated by the universities and colleges, the academic

calendar throughout J&K would be made uniform and synchronized with the national calendar

Principal Secretary stressed on enhancing the employability of college pass outs in line with NEP-2020. He said colleges have to act as real agents of change and the success of NEP 2020 depends on how well they implement it at the ground level.

He said, as envisaged by NEP, the curriculum must include basic arts, humanities, languages, literature, culture and values in addition to science and mathematics to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners.

The Principal Secretary said the main thrust of NEP is to end fragmentation of higher education by transforming higher education institutions into large multidisciplinary universities, colleges, and knowledge hubs.

He exhorted upon the college authorities to give equal emphasis on teaching and research. He said the research ecosystem can be improved and enhanced through a holistic and multidisciplinary education approach. He added that the colleges need to enable and encourage high-quality multidisciplinary/cross-disciplinary research.

He referred to the decision of the UT administration of ensuring that all higher education institutions move progressively towards greater autonomy. He said all the degree colleges would apply for accreditation

or provisional registration (PAC) under the NAAC framework this year.

Principal Secretary said research and teaching collaborations and faculty and student exchanges with reputed foreign institutions will be facilitated through mutually beneficial and relevant MOUs.

He said student feedback shall be solicited online to ensure valuable input at regular intervals to ensure efficiency in working of the colleges.

He emphasized the need for revitalization of the career counselling cells of the colleges and directed that each college should ensure workshops and lectures by professionals to guide the students in the placement process. He also advised the colleges to encourage and guide the students to access higher learning and research opportunities not just in the rest of the country but reputed institutions overseas too.

Earlier, Principal, GCW M A Road, Professor Nasreen Aman, briefed the Principal Secretary about the rich legacy of the college besides ongoing research and skill enhancement projects.

Professor Nasreen presented a memento as a token of affection to the Principal Secretary on his first visit to the college. On the occasion, Principal Secretary also released the latest edition of the college magazine 'The Pamposh'.

J&K adds 1900 MVA transmission capacity in year 2022

Srinagar: While marching towards realizing the dream of providing 24x7 power supply to its consumers the Power Development Department (PDD) has been successful in adding about 1900 MVA transmission capacity to its kitty in the year 2022 alone.

The unprecedented achievements in power generation, transmission & distribution sectors in the last year have completely overhauled J&K's power infrastructure which remained dilapidated for several decades. This reflects the remarkable progress attained by the UT in the power sector. The total transmission capacity on March 31, 2021, was 9153 MVA and in one-year the capacity reached 11016 MVA.

With the focused intervention the UT government is working to make Jammu and Kashmir power surplus in the next four years as the electricity generation capacity in the union territory is set to be doubled in the coming three years.

As already elucidated by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha number of times that J&K was able to harness only 3,500 MW of electricity in the last 70 years, but the power generation capacity in the UT is set to be doubled in the next three years and trebled in seven years. "To address the current power deficit, we have initiated a large-scale capacity augmentation programme. In the 70 years, J-K was able to harness only 3500 MW, and now generation capacity is set to be doubled in three years and tripled in seven years" he said recently while inaugurating several projects of the department.

Moreover, Transmission and Distribution projects worth Rs 2000 crore are being completed and an additional amount of Rs 6000 crore has been allocated by the central government to strengthen the Sub-Transmission and Distribution network across the UT.

To provide quality electricity to all citizens and businesses, the aug-

mented facilities will address the important need of the growing economy. Since August 2019, 3806 MVA has been added to the total capacity as compared to the 8394 MVA capacity achieved in seven decades.

The government is planning to invest Rs12,000 cr for capacity augmentation and upgrading the transmission & distribution systems to remove all supply constraints, and strengthening electrification assets, an official said. "Electricity will be delivered through underground wires in the capital cities of Jammu & Srinagar," he added. It is pertinent to mention that Rs 5000 cr investment in system strengthening has yielded impressive outcomes in power distribution.

According to the statistics provided by the power department, 226 substations of 33/11Kv capacity were installed or augmented besides the installation of 6702 distribution transformers. "The distribution network is being strengthened as 2243 CKM HT Lines were laid, 5253 CKM LT lines were laid last year," revealed the officer. He said that with augmentation work on 21 Sub-stations completed last year and another 21 completed by 31 March 2022 the power scenario in the UT is going to change for the better.

The decade long overdue upgradation of power infrastructure which was ignored by successive regimes is being done in a sustained manner. According to a senior official, the present administration is eliminating the legacy of delays and all the languishing projects hanging for long are being completed in a record time.

The J&K Power Development Department is setting new standards in project planning and execution. These measures will not only resolve the power crises during peak season but will also open a host of employment opportunities by meeting the growing demand for the opening of new industries in the UT.



EFFORTS ON TO MAKE J&K TOP GOLFING DESTINATION IN COMING DAYS: LG

Jammu: Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday inaugurated Golf Training Academy for students here and said his endeavour is to make the union territory one of the top golfing destinations of the country in coming days.

The administration has already established a Golf Academy at Kashmir Golf Course, Srinagar, to popularize golf among youth and students.

“And, now within a year, the first batch of 100 children is starting their basic training at Jammu Tawi Golf Course and after 15 days, Phase-2 of this training will commence. More students from government established schools in different districts would be provided golf training,” the LG said.

The newly inaugurated Golf Academy at Jammu Tawi Golf Course aims to train the students and youth and to support them to turn into professional golfers so that the youth of J&K is able to showcase their talent in the professional domain, an official spokesman said.

He said the academy will run a program of continuous education for the general public including kids, adults, and amateur golfers, besides certifying the individuals participating in the program.

“It will also be a training centre for the national and state-level players,” the spokesman said.

The LG said international level golf courses have been built all over Jammu and Kashmir and “it is our endeavour that UT emerges as one of the top golfing destinations of the country in the coming days.”

Sinha said J&K is a powerhouse of sporting talent and the UT administration is committed to provide both opportunities and resources to advance coaching.

He said the Golf Academy started at Jammu Tawi Golf Course is a symbol of that spirit. “The UT administration is making efforts to make this game inclusive and accessible to common masses.”

Further, the Sanasar Golf Course will also be revamped, he said.

“Prime Minister has ended the decades-old practice of discrimination in J&K by establishing a citizen friendly, accountable and responsible governance system post August 2019. We are making relentless efforts to ensure every person in the society feels connected to the mainstream”, the LG said.

He said in the last one year, appointments to 11,000 government posts have been made where youth, especially girls from common poor and marginalized households have secured government jobs on the basis of merit.

He said the new governance system believes in corruption-free, transparent, and inclusive growth.

“Developing sports infrastructure, organizing sports events in every nook and corner of UT, arranging the best coaches, continuously monitoring and fully utilizing the existing assets are the broad strategies that the UT administration has been working on for the last one and a half years to completely transform the sporting ecosystem in the J&K,” Sinha said.

This year, he said 221 playfields will be constructed in all 20 districts, besides construction and upgradation of 157 sports courts will be completed.

On the occasion, the LG also distributed a handbook on ‘Basic Skills of Golf’ to the children.

Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary, Tourism department, in his address gave details of the Golf Academy and its courses opened for students from government established schools. He also highlighted different flagship projects for increasing the tourism potential of Jammu region.

R K Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department; Dr. Raghav Langer, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Sheikh Fayaz Ahmad, Commissioner/Secretary Department of Floriculture, Parks, and Gardens, besides officials of Jammu Tawi Golf Course and students of various government schools were present.

Multi-utility crop 'Lavender' introduced in Uri, Baramulla

Baramulla: In a significant move to contribute towards environmental sustainability viz-a-viz ameliorating the socio-economic conditions of the people, Agriculture Production Department Baramulla in collaboration with Rural Development Department Baramulla has introduced the multi-utility crop 'Lavender' in Uri belt of Baramulla district.

The crop has been introduced with the active participation of Panchayat

Raj Institutions (PRIs) who worked tirelessly to realize this mission.

It is worth mentioning here that Lavender crop is a significant crop having ornamental, medicinal as well as therapeutic benefits. It is a flowering plant in the mint family that is easily identified by its sweet floral scent.

Elaborating the details of this move, Chief Agriculture Officer Baramulla said that such an initiative was taken to add scenery to our

environment besides having other public utilities. He said that such a crop has several medicinal as well as nutritional values and its plantation has been taken on a large scale in Uri belt which is conducive for its growth.

Meanwhile, ACD Baramulla said that the Rural Development Department is taking keen interest to work towards restoration of ecological balance viz-a-viz the task of rural development.



Panchayati Raj System scripting democratic decentralisation of governance in J&K

Srinagar: The resolve of the Central Government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to return power to the people of J&K is reciprocated by the people of the UT to turn to democratic decentralisation to achieve better governance and development.

To strengthen the grassroots democracy, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) amended the J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989 for the first time in October 2020 and paved the way for the creation of District Development Councils (DDC).

"27 functions were transferred as per 73rd amendment. In 14th Finance Commission Rs 1727.50 cr devolved under MNREGA, Mid-Day meal scheme and ICDS. Panchayats were empowered to generate resources," a senior official said.

DDC is a directly-elected local government body in each district with jurisdiction over the entire district excluding areas designated as a municipality or municipal corporation.

The newly created DDC along with Halqa Panchayats and Block Development Councils (BDCs) are ensuring a three-tier Panchayati Raj system for the first time in the region. The elected third tier of the Panchayati Raj institution marks the implementation of the entire 73rd Amendment Act in J&K, which was never made effective by previous governments.

The District Development Council (DDC) elections in Jammu and Kashmir provided self-rule and autonomy, and empowered leaders from the grassroots to take their own decisions as committed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to empower the people at the grassroots.

DDC Elections in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir were a part of a 3-tier system to strengthen democracy at the grassroots level which J&K has never witnessed in the past 70 years.

The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), through which the self-government of villages is realized, have been entrusted with the task of "economic development, strengthening social justice and implementation of Central and State Government Schemes at the grassroots level.

The democratic exercise of free, fair and peaceful panchayat elections were held in the UT which led to the constitution of vibrant Panchayati Raj institutions. In a significant achievement, these panchayat elections recorded a substantial 74.1 per cent voter turnout. A total of 3650 sarpanches and 23660 panchs were elected to lay the foundation for the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system for the first time across J&K.

After the successful conduct of the Panchayat elections, elections for Block Development Councils (BDCs) were conducted for the very first time in the history of J&K. The BDC elections saw an overwhelming voter turnout of 98.3 per cent in which 276 chairpersons were elected in a transparent manner.

Finally, District Development Council elections were held in 8 phases which witnessed a tremendous voter turnout of 51.7 per cent. The process elected 20 DDC Chairpersons and 20 Vice-Chairpersons; a total of 278 DDC members were also elected thus completing the implementation of the 3-tier Panchayati Raj system in its total form.

To give these institutions financial strength, a historic district level planning process was accomplished in accordance with the constitutional mandate. The preparation of the plan adopted a bottom-up approach-first at the panchayat level, then at the block level and then at the district level.

"District plan was approved for all 20 districts via online meeting with participation of all DDC chairpersons, district administration and concerned departments," a senior official said. "Plan allocation was more than doubled in 2021-22, i.e. Rs 12600 cr in comparison to Rs 5136 cr in 2020-21."

For the first time since independence, elected grassroots representatives get formal protocol- hoist the National flag on Independence day/Republic day. The elected representatives were given honorarium and formal position in the warrant of precedence and a regular system of interaction of district officers with panchayat representatives was institutionalized.

Regarding the key focus areas of the UT, the Lt Governor has said that after the democratic decentralisation in the spirit of the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment Act, 14 sectors have been identified for investment at a large scale with a special focus on tourism and employment.

The PRI representatives were trained through a slew of capacity building and training programmes to further enhance their skills and efficiency in reputed training institutions like IMPARD and outside institutions as well. Besides, induction courses on digital literacy training, gram panchayat development plan training and training workshops have been organized for newly elected BDC Chairpersons. About 711 elected representatives have been provided training cum exposure visits outside UT.



BUDGET 2022-23 to transform J&K from aspirational to industrialised territory: Govt

Jammu: The industrial landscape of the J&K is dominated by MSME and it plays a crucial role in propelling industrial growth and economy in UT as they contribute around 8% to the GSDP and employ the largest number of people in the manufacturing and services sectors.

Approximately 25,000 MSMEs that are operational in the UT contribute almost 60% of the total investment and 90% of total employment in the industrial sector in the UT. It is thus imperative that the MSME sector be further supported through policy interventions.

For Industries and Commerce Sector, an allocation of about Rs 555.80 crore has been made under Capital Expenditure for the year 2022-23 which is Rs.139.84 crore more than the previous year's budget allocation.

The Government of Jammu & Kashmir is providing an enabling environment for investors to start their ventures in the Union Territory.

The focus of the Jammu & Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021-30 is to attract new investment, creation of employment opportunities for youth, development of backward regions and nurturing of existing industrial units.

Adequate provision has been kept for providing incentives to prospective entrepreneurs as per Jammu & Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021-30. The financial outlay of the proposed scheme is Rs 28,400 crores for the scheme period 2020-21 to 2036-37. Scheme while encouraging new investment, also nurtures the existing industries in J&K by providing them working capital support at the rate of 5% for 5 years.

The J&K Government is set to hold its first J&K Global Investors Summit with an objective to bring together investors, decision-makers, senior government officials and local business community for a dialogue on concrete investment opportunities in the state. It will be replete with Strategic Sectoral sessions, Round Table Deliberations, one-to-one Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Government (B2G) meetings. The main objective behind the summit is to increase the employment opportunities by accelerating the industrial growth in the newly carved UT.

Under the new budget, Rs.150 crore have been provisioned for development of New Industrial Estates during 2022-23.


Also, a sum of Rs.42.60 crore have been earmarked for development of new Industrial Estates at Budhi Kathua, Mearth Ghatti, Rakh Rara Swankha Morh Samba & Katli Dhaini (Samba) in Jammu division and Khonmoh, Sempora, Chandgam Tahab, Hardoo Dahrana Dooru and Hassan Noor in Kashmir division.

Rs 3.91 crore have been provisional for construction of 7 Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) in the existing Industrial Estates. Common effluent treatment plants (CETPs) are treatment systems specifically designed for collective treatment of effluent generated from small-scale industrial facilities in an industrial cluster. The main objective of CETP is to reduce the treatment cost for individual units while protecting the environment.

1,354 units under Jammu & Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (J&K REGP) will be established in 2022-23 involving margin money of Rs.25 crore with employment to 8124 persons. REGP is implemented through the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) to help eligible entrepreneurs to set up village industry units and thus create employment opportunities in villages including small towns with population upto 20,000.

2,000 Cooperatives/Self Help Groups will be covered under Credit Card Scheme benefiting directly/indirectly 20,000 persons. 7% interest subvention is available for availing loan upto Rs.2 lakh by artisans under Artisan Credit Card (ACC) Scheme. It is a card designed exclusively for artisans, to meet their day to day working capital needs.

The vision for industrialization of Jammu & Kashmir is to transform Jammu & Kashmir from an aspirational to an Industrialized territory and unlock its potential through Convergence (UT and Central) and Collaboration (Industry and Government). The industry policy framework will be driven by the slogan Jammu & Kashmir Tradition, Growth and Transformation. The policy intends to provide a regulatory environment within a supportive framework of Ease of Doing Business.



LG stresses organic farming for tackling challenges of climate change, soil degradation

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday stresses the importance of organic farming for tackling the challenges of climate change and soil degradation.

Addressing the first Zonal Convention on Natural Farming at SKUAST-Jammu on the theme “Natural Farming: A National Priority for Human Health and Ecological Restoration”, the LG congratulated AGRIVISION and SKUAST-Jammu for organizing the convention on the relevant topic of natural farming, an official press release informed.

He said that such deliberations will help the policy makers, planners, and farmers to focus on increasing the sustainability of farm livelihoods, environmental safety, and human health.

The LG said that J&K UT is giving major impetus to natural and organic farming and has registered a record increase in terms of area covered under organic certification in a sustainable manner.

“Today, J&K is amongst the major organic producing States/UTs in the country. We are methodically developing a robust ecosystem by extending financial assistance, technological and marketing support for better realization of prices to farmers,” the LG added.

“With the combination of market linkages, large scale mechanization, organic farming, and farmer-centric reforms, we have made significant achievements in increasing our farmers’ income, wherein J&K ranks third in the list of top five states in terms of relative income of farmers. Our agriculture sector is going to contribute substantially towards realizing the goal of a self-reliant India,” the LG said.

He also stressed that in the long run, organic farming with technology based assistance will reduce the input cost and usher in rural prosperity.

“Natural & organic farming can effectively tackle the challenges posed by climate change and soil degradation. We are addressing the concerns of small and marginal farmers, and instead of narrow silos, agriculture and allied sector is being developed to ensure farm sustainability for the farmers,” the LG said.

Expressing gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for making organic farming a mass movement, the LG urged the farming community to pay more attention to diversification along with shift to organic farming.

He stressed that this integrated approach in agriculture can only facilitate sustainability and growth, thereby achieving Gram Swaraj and Anna Swaraj.

The LG also underlined the importance of harnessing the full potential of organic farming, and utilizing local resources, besides developing the infrastructure keeping in mind the requirements of the national and international markets.

“This year’s budget of the UT has a huge allocation of Rs 2835 crore for the agriculture sector and Rs 646 crore for the horticulture sector. For the development of the dairy and sheep sector, Rs 392 crore has been allocated to bring positive changes in the lives of the farming community,” the LG observed.

He noted that collective efforts are being made to bring down the usage of fertilizers. Subsidy is being provided to the entrepreneurs under ‘One District One Product’, and dairy industry, besides nine lakh farmers will be provided with improved quality seeds. We also aim to add another two lakh metric tonnes into the food processing and storage capacity, he added.

On the occasion, the LG called upon the officials and agricultural scientists to consistently disseminate relevant and authentic information to the farmers regarding the organic farming so that small and marginal farmers can also take advantage of it.

“Whilst the incentives of government facilitate move towards sustainability, our agricultural scientists must look forward to develop technologies that enhance productivity and at the same time maintain the fertility of land, besides focusing on increasing production of oilseeds, expansion of micro-irrigation facilities and use of high yielding seeds on priority basis,” he added.

The LG also advised scientists to publish their research findings in vernacular languages making it easily accessible for the local farming community and maximum percolation of knowledge from universities to farms.

Earlier, the LG conferred Krishak Rattan and entrepreneurial awards to Padma Shri Bharat Bhushan Tyagi, Javed Ahmed, Sham Singh Chowdhary, Sanjay Kumar and Dinkar Kaushal for their contribution in natural farming. He also laid the foundation stone for the International Family Hostel at SKUAST and visited various stalls put up by the start-ups.

Prof. J.P. Sharma, VC, SKUAST-Jammu in his address lauded the LG-led government for promoting innovation, incubation, start-up, national saffron mission, high density plantation, custom hiring, central machinery bank, value addition, processing, marketing and transportation of perishable agriculture produce at reasonable rates for hand holding and increasing income of the farmers of the UT, the press release said.

It is time to take big steps, take agriculture out of labs, and associate it with nature, he added.

The VC also thanked the LG for new KVKs, grant of new faculties along with positions and infrastructural development of the Agriversity. He said that for the last one and a half years, the university has released 21 varieties of crops for the region.

Prof. Pradeep Kumar, Dean, School of Life Sciences, Central University, Dharamshala, H.P., in his address, highlighted the importance of organic and natural farming to meet the needs of the people.

A.K. Sood, CGM, NABARD, said that NABARD is consistently working in its endeavour to promote sustainability in agriculture through sustainable and equitable agriculture and rural development.

During the inaugural session, souvenir of the convention; Postal Card of Jammu Basmati-118, besides two publications – “Jammu Khite Ch Rai Bai” and “Jewik Paristhio me Sabzio me Fal Makhi Praband” were released.

Union Govt allocates Rs 9289.15 cr to J&K JJM

Jammu: The Union government, in its objective to give a push to Jal Jeevan Mission in Jammu and Kashmir, has allocated a whopping sum of Rs 9289.15 crore to the UT under Jal Jeevan Mission 2022-23, which is Rs.6412.71 crore more than the previous year's budget allocation.

"In 2021-22, the Centre had allocated Rs 2747 crore which was nearly 4 times more than the preceding year 2020-21. This year the government has allocated a staggering amount which is nearly more than double to its previous year budget. This substantial increase in JJM budgets every year is reflective of the concern and seriousness of the government towards materializing its commitment of providing tap water connections to every household and capacity building of Water Quality Management through testing, monitoring and surveillance."

Jal Jeevan Mission has been envisioned to have drinking water supply in rural areas, adequate quantity of prescribed quality on regular and long term basis at affordable service delivery charges leading to improvement in living standards of rural community.

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir contemplates to become 'HAR GHAR JAL' Union Territory by the financial year 2022-23. Out of total 18.35 lakh rural households in the UT, 10.39 lakh (57%) households have tap water connections.

In a significant achievement, Srinagar and Ganderbal districts have achieved the target of having 100% households with tap water connections. Efforts are also being made to ensure tap water availability for drinking, cooking mid-day meals, washing hands and usage in toilets in all schools and Anganwadi centres. As on date, 22,421 schools (100%) and 23,926 (100%) Anganwadi centres in J&K have been provided with tap water supply.

Considering the importance of water testing for monitoring operation of water supply, verification of safety of drinking water and investigation of disease outbreaks, 2.50 lakh water quality tests have been planned to be conducted in 2022-23. Besides, accreditation of all 20 district water testing laboratories will be achieved and all sub-divisional laboratories will be registered during 2022-23 under National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL). Also, 1,589 water supply schemes have been targeted to be completed during 2022-23.

Jal Jeevan Mission presents a lifetime opportunity to put in place a system which lasts for next 30-40 years and people living in villages continue to get assured tap water supply. In this regard, Gram Panchayats and its sub-committees including village water and sanitation committee or Pani Samitis would take over the responsibility for management, operation and maintenance of the water supply system. The Mission is being implemented in a decentralized

manner, following a bottom-up approach, wherein local village communities are being empowered to shoulder the key responsibility of planning, implementation, management, operation and maintenance of the in-village water supply system. This is in consonance with the 73rd amendment of the constitution devolving the power to local Self-Governments.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) has been formulated with the vision of extending the coverage of irrigation 'Har Khet ko pani' and improving water use efficiency 'More crop per drop' in a focused manner with end to end solution on source creation, distribution, management, field application and extension activities. Nearly, 43 ongoing minor irrigation schemes under Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme – Prime Minister's Krishi Sinchai Yojana (AIBP-PMKSY) will be physically completed during 2022-23. Besides, 28 thousand hectare of Irrigation Potential has been targeted to be created and stabilized during 2022-23.

Similarly, the balance portion of work on Tawi Barrage costing Rs.73.34 crore is expected to be completed during 2022-23. The proposed gated barrage on Tawi is one of the three sub projects of the prestigious artificial lake project which was conceptualized to give a boost to regional tourism in Jammu by creating recreational activities like boating and water sports besides enhancing the overall aesthetic look of the city. The other two subprojects, viz Tawi river development project and beautification and creation of tourist facilities are to be executed by the housing and urban development department and tourism department respectively.

The work on Ujh Multi-Purpose Project (UMPP) is also expected to start during 2022-23 for which Detailed Project Report (DPR) stands redesigned. 196 MW Ujh Multipurpose Project (Hydropower, Irrigation and Drinking) is first of its kind in Jammu and Kashmir which envisages utilization of water resource potential of River Ujh, a tributary of River Ravi.

In addition, flood protection works costing Rs.27.91 crore for safeguarding the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) site at Vijaypur, Jammu, have also been targeted to be completed by 2022-23.

The Jal Jeevan Mission has been transforming the face of rural water supply across UT 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. And the transformative budget of 2022-23 will allow for an unprecedented reach to the rural and backward regions of UT to strive and thrive.

All JK colleges to start skill courses this year

Jammu: 'A good college strives to give employability to youth and its strength lies in its academic excellence. The quality and quantum of improvement it brings in lives is the true test of its impact on society.' The remarks were made by Principal Secretary Higher Education Department, Rohit Kansal during e-inauguration of an additional block in Government Degree College Marh.

The Principal Secretary assured that construction of the college campus would be started in this financial year and it would be ready to move by early next year. The college runs from a pre-fabricated structure at present.

It was assured by the Principal Secretary that the UT administration would provide more pre-fabricated structures for the college in the present financial year. It was also suggested that the college submit a detailed project report, to Director Planning, for additional infrastructural requirements of the college.

During his address, the Principal Secretary lauded the college for attracting a sizable number of student admission, particularly girl students. He called the feat 'signs of a good college' and said that the college has been successful in fulfilling local aspirations and requirements of young students. He also appreciated the college for suc-

cessful commencement of skill development and skill enhancement courses.

Among other things, the Principal Secretary directed colleges to prepare a framework of courses to be provided under the National Education Policy and provide holistic development to young students. He also urged them to improve in rankings and get accredited under NAAC norms. With regards to the policy, the Principal Secretary announced that all government colleges would start giving skill development courses.

He called for giving students a facility to provide feedback on the quality of instruction through a feedback system. In return, it would provide teachers a chance to improve and build on their strengths, said the Principal Secretary and added that set guidelines in this regard would also be introduced.

The Principal Secretary suggested starting pre-admission and career counselling facilities in colleges and advised them to improve the surroundings, cleanliness of common areas and toilets.

The online event was attended by Director Colleges, Dr Yasmeen Ashai, Principal GDC March, Dr Aekta Gupta and HoD Mathematics, Prof Dr Ram Dayal among others.

Agri Kmr gets Rs 30.43 cr under CAPEX 2022-23: Principal Secretary

Jammu: The government today approved an action plan worth Rs 30.43 crore to give a major boost to agricultural activities in Kashmir division during 2022-23.

The sanction was accorded during a meeting chaired by Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare, Navin Kumar Choudhary.

Navin Choudhary exhorted the officers to explore and add one additional potential crop in the entire Kashmir division during this fiscal. He assured that oil seeds and fodder, in addition to vegetables, will be given complete support and promotion to further enhance income of farmers. He expressed satisfaction over coverage of almost 70 per cent of fields under mustard cultivation after paddy harvest, which was earlier used to be merely 6 to 7 per cent.

Principal Secretary directed for issuing Soil Health Cards to all farmers by 31st May, 2022 asking the officers to work in a mission mode in this regard.

It was informed that an amount of Rs. 2.00 crore has been kept in this year's Capex budget to further enhance Saffron cultivation in the Valley. Similarly, Rs 3.00 crore have been kept for community bore wells to address water shortage in kandi areas of Kashmir Valley.

Besides, an amount of Rs.6.00 crore



has been kept in the action plan for providing support for purchase of tractors, tillers, land levellers, combine harvesters and related tools to promote farm mechanisation. Also, subsidy will be given for purchase of 200 tractors by the farmers of the Valley during the current year.

The meeting was further apprised that in view of quality certified seeds and replacement of seeds being the top most priority, an amount of Rs.12.00 crore will be spent on realising full potential of all agricultural farms of the department for production of high quality seeds during this fiscal. The seeds will be provided to farmers on subsidized rates for not only cereal crops

but also for vegetables, exotic vegetables, spices like Kashmiri Mirchi, haldi, medicinal plants, potato and oil seeds.

To promote additional agricultural activity and entrepreneurship, an amount of Rs. 2.00 crore will be expended on mushroom cultivation as well as apiculture.

The Principal Secretary asked for taking effective measures towards GI tagging of more premium products during the current year. He also emphasized effective communication with the farmers by way of promotional and information dissemination activities, for which a substantial amount has been kept in the Capex budget this year.

Dr Mehta unveils calendar of sports activities under “My Youth My pride”

Srinagar: Chief Secretary Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta unveiled the calendar of sports activities under the mission of “MY NATION MY PRIDE” initiative of J&K Sports Council on the banks of river Jehlum here today.

Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, P.K Pole; Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad; Secretary, J&K Sports Council, Nuzhat Gul; senior officers from departments like Information, Health, SDRF, NDRE, Tourism, JKTDC, J&K Police, SMC and other allied departments were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary appreciated the role played by the J&K Sports Council for giving much-needed impetus to the sports activities across J&K. He said, “Government is keen to provide all facilities to players, be it technical support or equipment and gears meant for the game.”

Dr. Mehta remarked that the government will go extra yard to hone the skills of youth and I am sure they have the potential to go a mile ahead of their competitors. He added that his statement is validated every time J&K athletes participate in national championships and emerge as medallists in various sports.

Nuzhat Gul, Secretary Sports Council in her welcome address highlighted the significance of ‘My Youth My Pride’ initiative for developing the culture of sports among youth across Jammu and Kashmir.

AT JAMMU: Principal Secretary, Youth Services and Sports (YS&S), Alok Kumar unveiled the sports activities calendar of J&K

Sports Council for Jammu region at MA Stadium here today.

More than 3000 players and coaches were present during the calendar unveiling ceremony.

During the calendar unveiling ceremony, a cricket match for specially abled cricketers was also held at the venue.

While declaring the tournament open, Alok Kumar, stressed upon all the stakeholders especially coaches to play an important role in tapping the talent in the rural areas and that they should customize the coaching programmes to accommodate talent from such areas.

The Principal Secretary impressed upon the officers to provide every possible help to athletes from weaker economic backgrounds so that all talent is brought to the fore and reaches its deserved platform.

He also emphasized that the government will engage maximum youth in sports and games and provide them a healthy environment to grow.

Alok Kumar appreciated the initiative of Sports Council for providing a platform for blind cricketers to showcase their talent.

Later, the Principal Secretary also had one-to-one interaction with coaches and players and asked them for feedback to make sports in J&K more vibrant and ensure inclusive growth of all.

Speaking on the occasion, President Hockey J&K, Rajeev Sharma announced kits and other gear for all the blind cricket teams participating in the cricket tournament being organized in M.A Stadium.



Citizens praise 'revolutionary' Apki Zameen Apki Nigrani initiative

Srinagar: E-governance, having immense importance in today's world, raises the transparency, accountability, efficiency and inclusiveness in the governing process in terms of reliable access to all information by the citizens.

Keeping pace with the innovation, the Jammu and Kashmir government under the stewardship of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, launched a historic initiative of extending hassle free online access to Land Records System to people which revolutionized the revenue world of the UT.

The J&K people have appreciated this move of the administration as a citizen friendly measure which would definitely bring in added transparency and accountability in the land record system.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, launched the Land Records Information System "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani", to allow public users to search and view copies of scanned data online on CIS Portal <http://landrecords.jk.gov.in/>.

The initiative has been introduced to reduce interference of revenue officials in land dealings and give people the right to access their land records at a click of a button, thereby reducing manipulation and improving the efficiency of Revenue offices substantially. "It was a sequel to the national programme of Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) envisaging enhanced services to the common people in land matters."

DILRMP was formally launched in the UT in April 2016 for improving online accessibility to the Land Records System bringing an end to corrupt practices thereby ensuring quality services in Sub Registrar and Tehsil offices.

Lieutenant Governor's administration ensured that the land record programme which was being implemented at a slower pace is speeded up and completed for the benefit of the common masses.

As part of program implementation in UT, 7.70 crore pages of Revenue record and 55216 Musavi (maps) have been scanned besides establishment of 3895 Ground Control Points. Also, Web-based Enterprise Geo-Information System (GIS) has been developed under the initiative.

Under Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities on "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani", the government orga-

nized special camps at Tehsil and Block level offices, Niabats, Patwar Khanas and Panchayat Ghars to educate the public about the digital platform where people can access their land records with one click.

"We are grateful to the present administrations at Center and UT level for launching such technological innovations in all spheres of development making the lives of people comfortable and convenient," maintained Sikamndar Noorani, District President All Jammu Kashmir Panchayat Conference while appreciating this historic initiative.

"Apki Zameen Aapki Nigrani' has empowered common people to check their land records on their mobiles getting a rid of moving from pillar to post for the same and safeguard our land on our won. I thank the LG administration for this revolutionary step," he added.

Similarly, Jehangir Ahmed of Bachpora says that visiting the Revenue office was a time consuming process and quite suffering but now I can check my land records while sitting at my home.

Government has also initiated the process of issuing trilingual land passbooks as a measure to fill the information vacuum and promote people's ease of access to the revenue records in Jammu and Srinagar districts. The first of its kind land passbook are being issued to the legal owners of land in Jammu and Kashmir in Urdu, English and Hindi languages.

As a reform to further boost transparency in public dealings of the Revenue Department, a mechanism of issuing revenue passbooks to the people containing information on all their legal land possessions has been evolved and a deadline of 15th August 2022 has been set by the government for completion of the process.

Showket Ahmed Rather of Tengpora Srinagar has all praise for the government's initiative, who says, "It is really a good step, everyone will be benefited. Earlier getting revenue extracts used to take months. With the land passbook, now everything is with the people. We have been relieved of the cumbersome process and nightmare of visiting revenue offices."

For Khurshed Ahmed Reshi of Tengpora, the initiative will expose people who grabbed government land and built infrastructure on public land.

Budget 2022-23 to provide rural people of J&K better prospects of economic dev

Jammu: The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is poised to become the latest success story among other States/ Union Territories and a model of socio-economic development for the Country.

To achieve this objective, the government has granted a significant allocation in the Budget 2022-23 for the Rural sector for the development of these areas and uplifting their status.

RURAL ECONOMY

Out of the total population of Jammu and Kashmir, more than 70% live in rural areas. Development of rural areas is key to overall development of J&K. The Rural sector needs infrastructure to support and ensure significant investments and developmental aids.

For the Rural Sector, an allocation of about Rs.4,627.85 crore has been made under Capital Expenditure for the year 2022-23 which is Rs.327.40 crore more than the previous year's budget allocation. In the recently announced budget for J&K, under MGNREGA, 426 lakh person days are targeted to be generated during 2022-23. Also, 60,000 job cards are proposed to be issued based on demand and 1 lakh developmental works of different nature will be initiated and expected to be completed.

Under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), 1,500 elected representatives will be provided exposure visits outside the Union Territory of J&K. Capacity building and refresher training will be imparted to 1,12,000 participants (PRIs/Line Department Officers/Officials) in a phased manner.

Moreover, internet connectivity will be provided to all the gram panchayats



across Union Territory of J&K. 400 new and 300 existing panchayat ghars will be taken up for construction and renovation respectively.

Under the new budget, 54,000 houses will be constructed under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Gramin (PMAY – G) during 2022-23. Under Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G), 87,250 Individual Household Latrines (IHHL) and 2,500 Community Sanitary Complexes (CSC) are targeted to be constructed during 2022-23.

Under National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), 21,194 Self Help Groups (SHGs) are proposed to be formed during 2022-23, 20,000 revolving fund and 18,000 Bank linkage are targeted to be covered.

Under Himayat (Deen Dyal Upadhyaya-Gramin Kaushalya Yojana), the skill training to 14,067 youth and 9,847 job placements are proposed to be taken during 2022-23.

Construction of residential/office accommodation for members of District Development Council/Block Development

Council/Panchayati Raj Institutions (DDC/BDC/PRIs) has been initiated. A provision of Rs.176.32 crore has been kept for the same in the budget 2022-23.

ROAD CONNECTIVITY

For the Road and Bridge Sector, an allocation of about Rs.5,217.87 crore has been made under Capital Expenditure for the year 2022-23. Upgradation of 1750 Kilometer Road length is likely to be taken up after receiving sanction of PMGSY-III during 2022-23. 50 bridges will be completed under Central/ Union Territory Sector schemes during 2022-23.

The Government of Jammu & Kashmir has rolled out a 3rd party inspection mechanism in the Public works (Roads & Bridges) Department. All ongoing works will be brought under the purview of a 3rd party inspection mechanism from financial year 2022-23. Maintenance of existing Road Infrastructure will get focused attention during 2022-23 in terms of Road Maintenance Policy 2021 approved by the Government of Jammu & Kashmir.

Overall 6,000 Kilometers of black-topping of roads is expected to be achieved during 2022-23 under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)/Cities & Towns/Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF)/National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development (NABARD)/Pothole Free Roads.

A good infrastructure and wide connectivity are the key factors for growth and development of the UT. Increased participation of people in the rural development process, decentralization of planning and greater access to credit and inputs holds the key in providing the rural people with better prospects for economic development.

Students, teachers watch PM's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha-2022' live across Kashmir

Srinagar: The fifth edition of 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' was today streamed live on Doordarshan, Youtube channel of MoE, Facebook Live and on All India Radio across all schools in all the districts of Kashmir, an official handout informed.

During the event which was telecast live from Talkatora Stadium, Delhi, the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi held interaction with students, teachers and parents. He discussed how to beat examination stress especially in the post-Covid19 pandemic era, besides sharing tips to do better in life.

The PM also spoke about the significance of the new National Education Policy-2020, among other important issues related to academics.

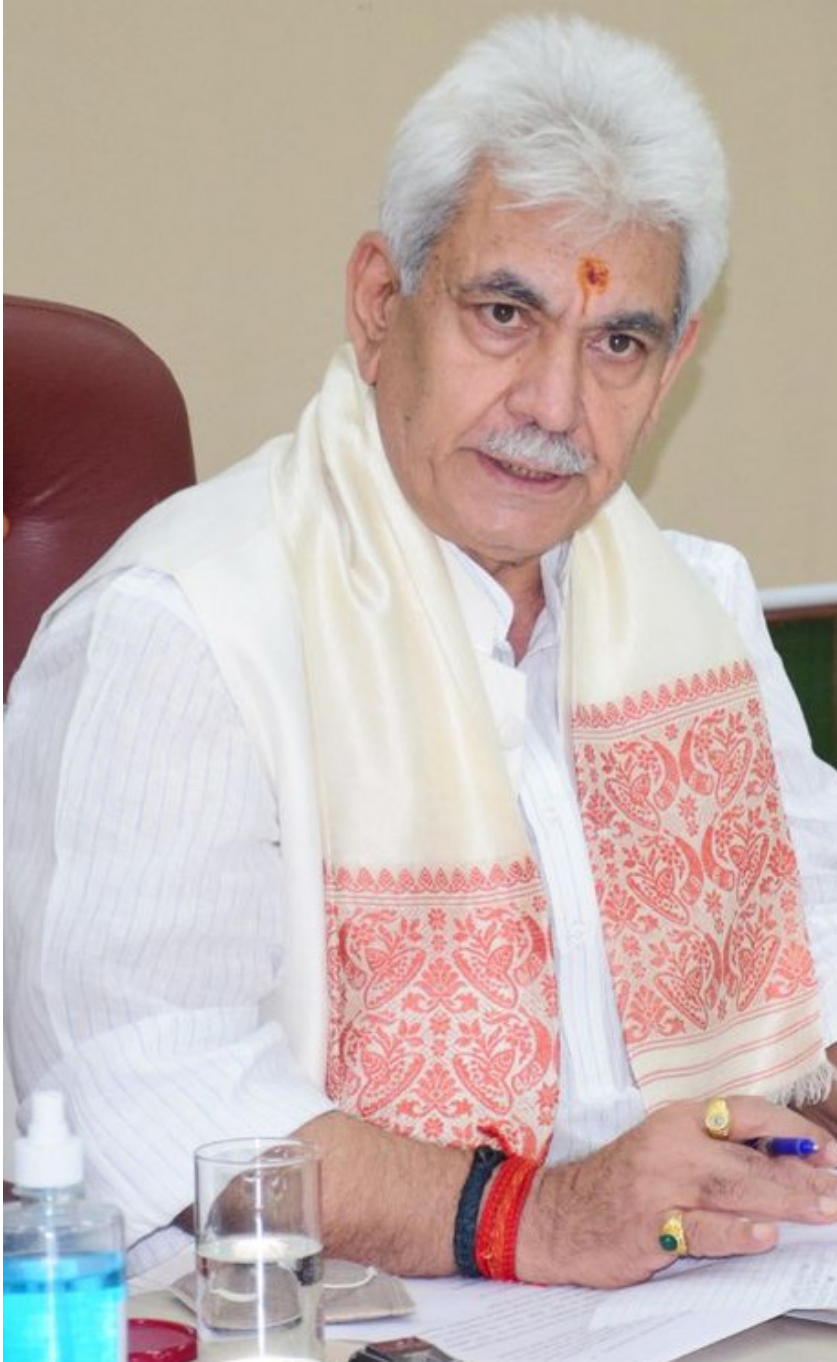
'Pariksha Pe Charcha' is part of the larger movement – 'Exam Warriors' – led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to create a stress-free atmosphere for youngsters. It is a movement that is driven by Prime Minister's efforts to bring together students, parents, teachers and the society to foster an environment where the unique individuality of each child is celebrated, encouraged and allowed to express itself fully, the

handout said.

Meanwhile at Srinagar, the Director School Education Kashmir, Tassaduq Hussain Mir along with Chief Education Officer Srinagar and principal, teachers and students of Government Girls High School Kothibagh watched the live telecast programme 'Pariksha pe Charcha' at the Auditorium Hall.

The programme was also watched live by a huge gathering of teachers and students at Government Girls High School Chanapora and at all the schools of Srinagar district, the handout informed.

LG stresses effective implementation of initiatives announced in J&K budget 2022-23



Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Friday chaired a high-level meeting to discuss ways for effective implementation of initiatives announced in J&K UT budget 2022-23 with an objective of sustaining growth momentum and bringing about synergy and convergence among various departments.

The LG said that the action oriented plan is to reflect fast economic development, strengthening institutions for rapid social change while ensuring growth with equity so that every citizen benefits from J&K's prosperity.

According to an official press release, the LG asked the administrative departments and district administrations to work in close-coordination and furnish the UT and district plans in consultation with public representatives and other stakeholders to realize the vision of "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas", bringing transformative changes in the lives of people without any discrimination.

"We have a substantial increase in the budgetary support for infrastructure development, education, healthcare, strengthening PRIs, facilitating investment & growth, employment, youth, women empowerment & social sector schemes to reach out to the last person in the last row," Sinha added.

He advised for formulating works plan around six important components – Objectives, Total Outlay, Broad Guidelines, Measurable Outcomes with Timelines, Expenditure Phasing & Evaluation. Specific directions were passed for the completion of the tendering process by the month of May.

"UT and district plans must be a road-map of J&K's development, progress and prosperity; reflective of the needs and aspirations of the people of J&K," the LG added.

Speaking on the governance reforms introduced in the last one and a half years, the LG said that efforts made to streamline the over-

all development process have yielded favourable results.

"Tax collection reached Rs 15,180 cr with 25.33 percent hike in the last financial year; all treasury bills, verified contractors' and pending languishing projects bills, Rs 810 cr power purchase liability cleared. An increase of Rs 625 cr registered in power receipts, besides Rs 600 cr equity contribution of J&K in Kiru and Ratle projects were paid," he added.

Expressing faith in the government machinery, the LG said that absolute transparency in the system, timely release of Capex budget components and completion of tendering process, and timely submission of UCs will lead the government to achieve an unprecedented feat in project completion in FY 2022-23.

Administrative Secretaries, Deputy Commissioners and other concerned officials were directed to put special focus on the development of border areas and villages, women and youth empowerment, welfare of senior citizens, Nasha Mukti Abhiyaan, Jal Jeevan Mission, saturation of CSS, MGNREGA, tribal welfare, rural economy and infrastructure.

The LG also suggested for analysis of the chosen works to be done to assess their effective implementation.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary asked the officials to work on mission mode for accelerating the pace of economic development in the UT of J&K.

"J&K is among the top performing UTs in terms of e-governance, e-office, ease of living, transparency, and saturation of welfare schemes. All the vital aspects must be taken into consideration in the UT and District plans to replicate the success of the previous financial year," he added.

Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance department said that the historic Rs 1, 12,950 crore budget of the UT of J&K for the year 2022-23 envisages all-round development in Jammu and Kashmir, meeting the aspirations of people. He also highlighted the achievements recorded in the previous financial year.

All Administrative departments were asked to upload the approved works plan on BEAMS portal with the approval of competent authority by 10th April, 2022.

Departments were asked to initiate the e-tendering process immediately in the month of April 2022 and ensure that each e-NIT must be issued by or before 30th April, 2022 and the exercise of tendering is carried out in a time-bound manner and all the tendering processes must be concluded by or before 31st May, 2022.

The flow of funds to the subordinate offices will be in online mode through BEAMS and all departments shall be required to submit monthly reports regarding the progress made by them under various components, the meeting was informed.

The projects undertaken during the year will need to meet basic discipline of Administrative Approval, Technical Sanction and e-tendering. Geo-tagged photographs will be necessary before commencement of the work and after completion of the work for incurring expenditure. The activities will be available for public viewing through EMPOWERMENT web-portal (www.janbhagidari.gov.in).

All the District Development Commissioners were asked to furnish the District Plans (project/work/activity wise) in consultation with the PRIs, BDCs and DDCs of the concerned district at the earliest.

Pertinently, the government has accorded sanction to authorization of 50 percent Revenue and Capex budget including District Capex out of Budget Estimates 2022-23 through Budget Estimation, Allocation and Monitoring System (BEAMS) within the appropriation approved by the Parliament.

R K Goyal, Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department; Vivek Bhardwaj, Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department; Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to LG, Administrative Secretaries; Divisional Commissioners; Deputy Commissioners, Superintendents of Police, Heads of the departments, and other senior officers attended the meeting, in person and through virtual mode, the press release informed.

J&K's annual budget sees steep hike during past three years

Jammu: The schemes under the social welfare sector, like Old Age Persons, Women in Distress, Physically Challenged People, Mal-Nourished children, Lactating and expecting women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and other Economically Weaker sections of the society plays an important role in improving the lives of these segments of the society.

As part of the national development initiatives, the commitment towards welfare of under-privileged and the downtrodden, backward and vulnerable sections of the society is tremendous. The role of the social welfare sector in fulfilment of this commitment thus becomes important and it has been instrumental for removing the distress of these sections through amelioration and anti-poverty measures.

Jammu and Kashmir's annual budget has seen a steep hike during the past three years. In 2019-20, J&K had 88,911 crore worth budget which went up to Rs 1 lakh crore for 2020-21 and this year J&K has received a whopping Rs 1.13 lakh crore (net) for the year 2022-23. This substantial increase in budget is mainly because of good performance by the Union Territory's Finance Department with no bills pending in the Government Treasuries for long, as used to be the case earlier.

For the social welfare sector, an allocation of about Rs.198.07 crore has been made under Capital Expenditure for the year 2022-23 which is Rs.4.93 crore more than the previous year's budget allocation. In the new budget, 100% coverage under all individual beneficiary schemes would be ensured in 2022-23. Distribution of dietary items and supplementary nutrition items are being made at the doorsteps of beneficiaries in all districts of the UT. There is also a proposal for Old Age Homes to be established in all districts. Motorized tricycles will be provided to all Handicapped persons thereby achieving 100% saturation level for which Rs 25 crore have been provisioned. Besides, geo-tagging of all the Anganwadi Centers will be made in collaboration with the Information Technology Department.

About 8,88,359 beneficiaries were provided pension benefits at the rate of Rs.1,000 per month under Integrated Social Security Scheme (ISSS) and National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP). There has been an increase of 59% of beneficiaries under social security and pension schemes.

In a landmark step, the transgender population has, for the first time, been included for pension benefits under ISSS.

The welfare of displaced Kashmiri people has been the top priority for the government which is visible from the fact that 1025 transit accommodation units have already been completed or substantially completed. 1488 units are at different stages of completion and the work on 2744 units of transit accommodation has been initiated. Out of 6000 posts created for Kashmiri Migrants under PM Package/PMDP-2015, 4678 posts have been filled and remaining posts are being filled up. Providing food grains, cash assistance and other benefits will continue under Security Related Expenditure (SRE) in 2022-23.

Tribal welfare also assumes immense significance. For Tribal Affairs, an allocation of about Rs.282.23 crore has been made under Capital Expenditure for the year 2022-23 which is same as the previous year's budget allocation. In the new budget, 100% coverage of pre-matric and post-matric scholarship to Gujjar and Bakerwal students and ST students with 100% disbursement through DBT expected to be accomplished in 2022-23. Besides, establishment of 14 Milk villages would be taken up in 2022-23 while 29 Cluster Tribal Model Villages are being established and are at different stages of implementation. Also, construction of seven transit accommodations/shelter sheds with an estimated cost of Rs 3.50 crore each would be taken up in 2022-23. Six Eklavya Model Residential Schools for ST students are being established.

The new budget lays the foundation for inclusive development for all sections of the society and the government is very keen to empower the weaker sections through various social and tribal welfare initiatives.

Rs 31.12 Cr scholarship awarded to tribal students for professional, academic courses

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir government has initiated various steps for strengthening the support to education of tribal students.

In line with the announcement made by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha for effective steps aimed at welfare of tribal population in J&K, the Tribal Affairs Department has disbursed highest ever scholarship amounting to Rs. 31.12 Crore to tribal students during the current financial year.

The Tribal Affairs Department has also earmarked a budget of 45 Cr for scholarship in the financial year 2022-23. The rise in scholarship budget is aimed at catering the proposed enhancement in scholarship amount for students of Class 1 to 8 in order to encourage primary education in rural areas.

Secretary, Tribal Affairs, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary informed that education of tribal students is a top priority of J&K Government and with keen interest of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha the department has disbursed highest ever scholarship amounting to Rs. 31 Crore to support the tribal students at Post-Graduate, Graduate, Post-Matric and Pre-Matric level. This also includes many cases of the previous two years pending due to various reasons.

The scholarship amount has been credited directly to the bank account of the students through PFMS mode. It was informed that a total number of 12,580 students received scholarship amounts to the tune of Rs. 15.40 Crore under Post Matric scholarship scheme while under Pre Matric scholarship scheme an amount of Rs. 13.50 Crore was disbursed to students studying in 1st to 8th class and an amount of Rs. 2.22 Crore was credited in the individual bank account of 7420 students of class 9th and 10th.

Post-Matric scholarship to the tune of Rs 15.40 disbursed to 12,580 students includes the students under professional courses clubbed under Group A viz MBBS, BDS, BUMS, Degree Engineering Courses, P.G. Courses in Medical & Engineering, BSc Agriculture, BVSc, BSc IT, M Phill, Ph. D Courses, Non-Professional (and all other Government Recognized Courses), UG & PG Level Courses, Computer Courses of 3 years, Group B viz Diploma Engineering Courses, All Medical Courses, B.Ed Courses & CHM "A" Level & "A" Level Courses (01 Years), Group C viz All other Courses leading to a graduate degree not covered under group I & II e.g., B.A/BSc/B. Com etc and Group D viz All Post-Matriculation Level Non-Degree Courses for which entrance qualification if High School (Class

Budget 2022-23: Rs 11, 832 crore allocated for education department in J&K

Jammu: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has introduced major changes in the education sector with path-breaking decisions to ensure quality, equity, accessibility, accountability and affordability in the system.

The department of School Education has achieved landmark strides so far by effectively implementing all schemes and projects envisaging a notable improvement in the existing curriculum besides embarking upon various innovative new projects and works.

In the recently announced budget for 2022-23, the highest allocation has been for the education department at Rs 11,832 crore which shows the government's commitment towards quality education for the children of J&K.

Mid-Day Meal (MDM) Scheme

The MDM Scheme is a school meal programme designed to improve nutritional standing of school-age children nationwide. The new budget proposes that only fortified rice be served to about 8.30 lakh students at elementary level (I to VIII) under MDM scheme for improving nutritional health of students. Software application developed by CBSE is to be utilized for monitoring implementation of MDM.

The Akshaya Patra Foundation, which is successfully implementing its own school lunch programme in the country, is to be involved in serving hot cooked meals to students enrolled in schools located in urban areas of Jammu and Samba District on a pilot basis. At Akshaya Patra, the menu is designed and implemented after taking into consideration various factors, including

regional palate, taste, and flavours. Menu diversity is achieved by using a wide variety of seasonal vegetables and locally available ingredients.

Establishing Kindergartens

With the implementation of the National Education Policy in Jammu and Kashmir, new kindergartens will come up across all Government schools.

Under the new budget of 2022-23, it has been decided that 500 Kindergartens will be established in government schools for increasing enrolment, providing early child care education and enhancing numerical and foundational literacy.

Smart/Virtual classrooms

518 smart/virtual classrooms will be established in higher secondary schools for imparting quality education to students. Also, 200 Vocational laboratories are to be established and 40 schools having vocational labs will act as hubs for imparting vocational/skill trainings.

Sports infrastructure

Under the budget 2022-23, sports being an indispensable part of quality education, sports Infrastructure will be developed in 100 schools (5 schools per district).

Residential Hostel facilities for girl students & Education of Tribal Students

In a bid to address girl child drop-out rate, 37 Girls Hostel Buildings and 12 KGBV (Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalays) buildings will be completed for improving residential facilities for girls and bringing about desired gender parity in education.

Fulfilling the commitment towards inclusive education, construction work of two residential schools, one each in the districts

of Rajouri & Shopian will be taken up for tribal students, besides 8000 meritorious tribal students are to be given tablets.

TALASH App

Under the scheme Talash, the School Education Department will rope in Panchayats and enrol all out-of-school children and ensure universal enrolment of students in Jammu and Kashmir.

Survey of out-of-school children to be conducted using TALASH app, developed by UNICEF and appropriate measures to be taken for mainstreaming them.

Higher Education

In the higher education department, 07 college buildings are to be completed in 2022-23. There will be establishment of Centers for Invention, Innovation, Incubation and Training (CIIT) at Jammu and Srinagar in collaboration with Tata Technologies during 2022-23 for skill development of students. NAAC accreditation of 59 colleges will be completed and an e-governance system in all the colleges is to be developed within J&K.

Two numbers of high-level Research Institutes for providing opportunity to students and faculty for high-end research and innovation will be set up and Skill enhancement training to nearly 20,000 under-graduate students is proposed in the new budget of UT.

The steps are also being taken on the implementation of educational reforms and the new budget on education will play a significant role in giving impetus to the realisation of a new and prosperous Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K's tax revenue goes up by 25.38% during 2021-22

Jammu: The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has recorded a significant hike of 25.38 percent in tax revenue collection during 2021-22 (ending March, 2022) against the collections made during the last fiscal, an official handout informed Thursday.

It said the total collections of indirect taxes like GST, excise duty, stamps and tax on motor spirits have been made to the tune of Rs 15,179.42 crore against Rs 12,105.95 crore collected during the previous financial year 2020-21.

The collection on account of Goods & Services Tax (GST) was Rs 11,163.95 crore against Rs 9,020.00 crore collected during the previous financial year thereby recording a robust growth of 23.77 percent, the handout said.

It said the tax collected on sale of motor spirits during 2021-22 was to the tune of Rs 1,829.73 crore against Rs 1,459.92 crore collected during the previous financial year thereby registering a growth of 25.33 percent. The buoyant growth in collections in this sector has been achieved despite of recent reduction of tax rate by the government in

respect of petrol, diesel and ATF, it said.

"In a remarkable accomplishment, the growth of revenue in the stamp duty collection has shown a steep hike of 56.12 percent as the total collection made have reached Rs 425.00 crore against Rs 272.22 crore recorded during the last fiscal. Likewise, collections made in the excise duty have been to the tune of Rs 1,760.74 crore against Rs 1,353.81 crore collected during the financial year 2020-21 thereby recording a substantial growth of 30 percent," the handout said.

"The impressive tax revenue generated during 2021-22 indicates revival and recovery of business and trade activities in the Union Territory," the handout said, adding that "proper planning, monitoring and effective implementation of Tax statutes in the Union Territory coupled with government's initiatives of bringing transparency and accountability in the system have tremendously contributed towards scaling up the momentum of collection of Tax Revenue."



Landmark step bridges decades-old void in J&K's healthcare system: LG

Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Thursday inaugurated 10-bed state-of-the-art Palliative/Geriatric Care Wards in all districts of Jammu & Kashmir.

While congratulating the Health department for creating the much-needed facility, the LG said the “landmark step bridges a decades-old void in our healthcare system by offering dedicated facilities to elderly and critically-ill ageing patients, ensuring their dignity and quality of life.”

According to an official press release, the LG observed that the need for accessible, effective geriatrics and palliative care has grown over the past several decades, but remained unaddressed in J&K.

“The palliative/geriatric care, which I had the pleasure to inaugurate today, demonstrates another social dimension. It places the care of the elderly as a top priority of the entire healthcare ecosystem in our quest towards building a strong, prosperous, and caring UT,” Sinha said.

Speaking on the transformation taking place in the health sector of J&K, the LG said that the government is introducing new reforms for developing a balanced healthcare ecosystem that promotes social equality, besides ensuring easily accessible quality health facilities for all.

“This important stride in the healthcare sector truly symbolizes PM Narendra Modi's vision of self-reliance, achieving excellence in modern health facilities for remote locations, and reducing the urban-rural divide to deliver services at people's doorstep,” added the LG.

“Our efforts to reform the health sector have been impressive. We have addressed the health infrastructure issue with a comprehensive and long-term national vision under the guidance of prime minister and even the far-flung areas now have adequate, affordable, and reliable healthcare facilities,” he added.

“New infrastructure has been built at a cost of Rs 7177 crore;

140 projects have been completed by spending Rs 881 crore to strengthen basic health facilities in all the districts. Moreover, Rs 7873 crore has been allocated for the health sector in this year's budget, which will create unprecedented health facilities in the UT,” the LG informed.

He also expressed gratitude to the doctors, paramedics, healthcare workers for their tireless contribution towards making J&K a leading UT in Covid management and vaccination in the country.

“To serve the one in need is our culture. We must dedicate ourselves to the service of mankind with responsibility, compassion, and utmost sensitivity and make the healthcare facilities easily accessible to all,” observed the LG.

On the occasion, the LG also called upon departments implementing various social welfare schemes to be proactive to the needs and issues of the elderly.

“It is the responsibility of all to make them aware of this new facility which is available in the district hospitals. The success of this historic initiative will be fully realized when no person has to wander for treatment, and the administration itself reaches out to the needy,” he underscored.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to LG also congratulated the health functionaries for establishing special care wards for elderly patients and called for effective utilization of the said facility.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary emphasized on creation of old-aged care homes on similar lines to palliative and geriatric care with a 360-degree approach for better care of the elderly population. He further suggested healthy competition amongst the hospitals in terms of maintenance and patient experience.

Vivek Bhardwaj, Additional Chief Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department, underscored the efforts of the department for creating palliative/geriatric care facilities in all District Hospitals of the UT of J&K



LG launches G2C Services, 24×7 dedicated helpline, IEC-Videos of Revenue Deptt



Jammu: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today launched G2C Services, 24×7 dedicated helpline, and IEC-Videos of Revenue Department at the Raj Bhavan.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor said that the institutional arrangements and processes to support the effective land administration and revenue related service delivery to the citizens will bring in greater transparency into the functioning of the department.

He further observed that 1662 Patwar Halqas institutionalized with the establishment of offices of Patwaris will ensure availability of the first interface of revenue hierarchy to the citizens in their areas of jurisdiction and prompt delivery of services.

It was informed that the department has notified that all Patwaris will remain physically present in their respective Patwar Halqas from 10 am to 12 noon, every Monday to Friday, for the convenience of people.

The Lt Governor also launched dedicated revenue helpline and IEC videos of Revenue Department for effective implementation of government programmes/schemes.

The Revenue helpline for ensuring prompt disposal of grievances, complaints pertaining to the Revenue Department are 0191-2456100 (landline) and 9419372000 (Whatsapp).

We have introduced e-governance to make the government citizen-friendly and further ease the interface between government and people, the Lt Governor said.

“Easing of Land Governance through digitization of land records has brought transformation in the life of ordinary citizens. With one-click access to land records & linking of Aadhaar and Mobile numbers will streamline service delivery, besides completely eradicating scope of record tampering and encroachments,” he added.

The G2C Revenue Services launched today include Encumbrance, Demarcation, Mutation, Online Fard Extracts among others. Further, Information Education and Communication (IEC)-Videos on the use of initiatives of ‘Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani’, Land

pass Books, and ‘Soochit Rahe-Sachet Rahe’ for operationalisation of Real-Time Land Information System (RTLIS), Seeding of Mobile Numbers and Aadhar in the land records were also launched.

The Lt Governor called upon the Deputy Commissioners to make use of Whatsapp groups and Video-on-Wheels facility to take the IEC videos to maximum number of citizens for an effective information campaign.

The Lt Governor observed that with greater transparency and a renewed sense of accountability, the revenue department has witnessed transformational citizen-centric changes in the last 1.5 years.

The Lt Governor underscored that the project of ‘Har Patwar-Ek Patwar Khana’, Revenue Helpline and the drive to issue land passbooks in three languages are unique interventions of J&K UT.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, J&K has emerged as a leading UT in the entire country for making land records information easily accessible to all, the Lt Governor said.

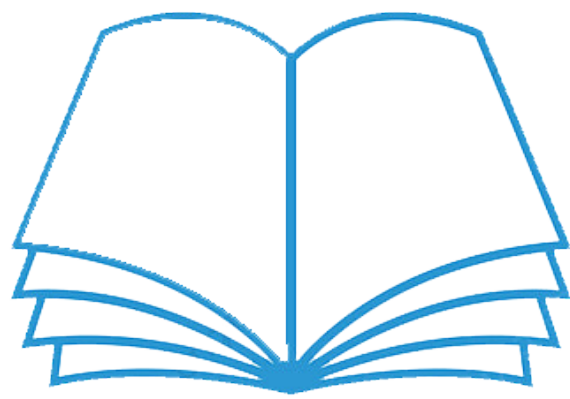
The Lt Governor also complimented the Revenue Department and the District Administrations for completing the project of Har Patwar Ek Patwar Khana in record time.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor handed over Land passbooks to citizens, while similar Land Passbooks were provided to the people in Kashmir division at their doorsteps by the concerned Tehsildars.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, while speaking on the occasion said that changes in the revenue department have brought a new era of transparency and accountability.

Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Commissioner Secretary, Revenue briefed the chair on the features and process of using different services launched.

R K Goyal Additional Chief Secretary, Home Department; Shaleen Kabra, Financial Commissioner, Revenue; Administrative secretaries; Divisional Commissioners; Deputy Commissioners and revenue officers were present on the occasion in person and through virtual mode.



JKPI Publications

BIOPESTICIDES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE



ADEELA HAMEED

Pesticides are used in agriculture, globally, to reduce yield losses and maintain produce pre/postharvest quality by eradicating unwanted insects and controlling disease and extend its shelf-life in order to keep pace with the growing demand for food. This extensive use of chemical pesticides has certainly provided protection to the crops. However, the practice has also raised concerns about pesticide residues in the food and environment.

In Kashmir valley, chemical pesticide use has reached a high. Human well-being and loss of productivity have, although, remained stagnant. Ignorance among less knowledgeable farmers has resulted in the indiscriminate application of pesticides. Studies have found that about 1/3rd of the pesticides used are spurious in nature. Chemical pesticides adversely affect beneficial organisms, leave harmful residues in food, feed, and fodder, and cause environmental pollution.

Food Crisis, Intensive Agriculture, and Environmental Issues

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations forecasted the need to increase world food production by 70% in order to keep pace with the increasing demand for food. Maximizing food production is the primary objective of all nations, as the global population is expected to reach approximately 10 billion by 2050.

Thus, arose a need to produce more food from less per capita arable land and available water. But providing ample food was only the first part of the challenge. The second and more important challenge was to produce and protect them in a safe and sustainable manner. This is where intensive agriculture was deployed, using green revolution technology, characterized by the use of high-yielding varieties, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides.

There are an estimated 67,000 agricultural pest species that damage crops. However, due to the issue of pest resistance and withdrawal of some products on either regulatory or commercial grounds, only a few chemical pesticides are available in the market. Out of the 215 pesticides registered for use in India, 39 have been banned for use or withdrawn from the market. Thus, the requirement for the manufacture of even more pesticides has built up.

While the progress in agricultural production has been very impressive, intensive agriculture has resulted in several undesirable effects on the environment, and the overall sustainability of farming systems.

There are rising concerns about the loss of biodiversity and endangered species, set against the requirement to increase agricultural production without excessive reliance on chemical pesticides. Hence, the need of the day is to produce maximum from the decreasing availability of natural resources, without adversely affecting the environment.

Need for Biopesticides

Environmental safety and agricultural sustainability are equally important for survival on Earth. This is where biopesticides come



into the picture.

Biopesticides or biological pesticides refer to the use of living biological organisms or their metabolites for pests, pathogens, weeds, nematodes, rodents, etc. In accordance with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization standards, biopesticides are generally natural compounds or genetic modification agents, including biochemical pesticides (pheromones, hormones, plant regulators, insect growth regulators) and microbial pesticides (fungi, bacteria, or genetically modified microorganisms), which do not include antibiotic agricultural preparations. However, in the practical application of agricultural production, biopesticides generally refer to the large-scale industrial production of microbial pesticides.

Biopesticides are made from naturally occurring substances that control pests by non-toxic mechanisms and in an eco-friendly manner. Hence, biopesticides pose less threat to the environment and human health. They are generally less toxic than chemical pesticides, often target specific, have little or no residual effects, and have acceptability for use in organic farming.

Biopesticide Use and Management

Increasing demand for pesticide residue-free crop produce is one of the key drivers of the biopesticide market. Growing organic food market and easier registration than synthetic chemical pesticides are other important driving factors.

The development of biopesticides has largely followed a chemical pesticide model that does not fully exploit favorable biological properties of the biological agents. While there is commercial pressure from the manufacturing side to develop products, the environmentalists prefer narrow-spectrum products based on the strains from the area of use.

To reconcile these divergent demands, biopesticides in the market have been maintained at minimal negative impact, if any, on the environment. Increased public concerns about potential adverse environmental effects associated with the use of synthetic pesticides prompted the search for products based on natural resources.

One such innovation is the Integrated Crop Management (ICM) program. It is a pragmatic approach to maintaining an intricate balance between environmental safety and agricultural productivity with sustainability being an important factor.

Objectives of ICM are:

- Reducing external inputs, such as inorganic fertilizers, pesticides, and fuel by means of farm-produced substitutes.
- As complete replacement of these inputs is not possible without significant loss of yields, partial substitution of the inputs can be achieved by the use of natural resources.
- In recent decades, the focus on crop production has shifted from yield to quality and safety. Evidence suggests that biopesticide is an important component for promoting sustainable agriculture, hence it has gained a lot of interest, particularly in view of the growing demand for organic foods.
- On this note, let's also know some downsides of biopesticides:
- Slower rate of control, often a lower efficacy, and shorter persistence compared to conventional pesticides
- Greater susceptibility to adverse environmental conditions
- Greater level of knowledge required by the grower to use them effectively
-

Recommendations

Globally, there are 175 registered biopesticide active ingredients and more than 700 products available in the market. The global biopesticide market has been valued at US \$2.3 billion. It was expected to reach US \$5.2 billion by 2020.

- But there is still a lot to achieve in this regard, now of all times, when people are consciously leaning towards safety rather than yield.
- Identifying the ill effects of synthetic pesticides, most countries have amended their policies to ensure minimal use of chemical pesticides and promote the usage of biopesticides. However, biopesticides are still under the regulatory system originally developed for chemical pesticides. This creates a market entry barrier by imposing burdensome costs on the biopesticide industry.

- Biopesticides represent only 1% of the global market for agrochemicals. So, policy measures need to be strengthened in order to minimize the use of chemical pesticides and promote the use of biopesticides.
- There are certain technical difficulties in making biopesticides more effective and applicable. Generally, biopesticide application is not complicated, however, it may require training and knowledge about pests/pathogens against which they can be applied successfully.
- The other challenging task is to develop a balance between the broadly defined costs and benefits of biopesticides compared with synthetic pesticides.
- The new-found biopesticides may bring with them new regulatory and economic challenges that must be addressed jointly by the social and natural scientists, policymakers, and the industry.
- One other major obstacle in promoting biopesticides is the lack of profile which again reflects the weakness of the policy network. The relative immaturity of the policy network, lack of trust between regulators and producers, and limited resources and capabilities are some of the serious issues that need to be addressed.
- A better understanding of the mode of action of biopesticides, their effects, and regulatory issues that arise during their adoption may help to raise their profile among the public and policy-makers.

Future Prospects

As environmental safety is a global issue, there is a need to create awareness among the common people to switch over to biopesticides for their pest management requirements. Biopesticides are expected to provide predictable performance. Deployed properly, biopesticides have tremendous potential in bringing sustainability to agriculture and ensure environmental safety.



A THEORY OF MOTIVATED REASONING: ISRAEL-PALESTINE CASE STUDY



ANAMITRA BANERJEE

The identity of the people of any nation is strongly connected to its policies and this concept is rooted in the formation of their beliefs about their country. Emotions in decision-making roles have been increasingly significant with the dynamics of geopolitics. Jerel A. Rosati advocated world politics to be in a hypothetical stage where leaders will act rationally with power while seeking power. In reality, a difference in this assumption was clearly represented while Adolf Hitler rose to power during the Nazi occupation. Thus, international geopolitics expresses a complex understanding of human weakness and irrationality. This is predetermined by the foundations of true wisdom, deeply rooted within practical psychology. The contemporary times outline a perfect blend of connections that has emerged out of the rational and intellectual approaches – wisdom gained by preferences and consequences, and understanding attained through beliefs and practices. The cognitive learning capacity is restricted to being open-minded, conscious, and adaptable while assuming that people may view their environment differently and function within their ‘mental environment’. The cognitive perspective helps to understand the general moments of how processes create uncertainty.

Taking cues from Rosati, five ways in which understanding and cognitive perspectives affect global politics are:

1. On the content of the policy maker’s beliefs
2. On the planning and structure of the policy makers’ beliefs
3. Through the same patterns of understanding
4. On the strength of the concept of change and learning
5. On the impact of policy making.

The way of thinking provides descriptive and predictive power in international relations research and foreign policy. Going from the level of foreign policy to the level of global politics, there is no need to abandon human understanding and the beliefs of policymakers because of the false psychological beliefs of rational actors. The more a person attaches himself to a nation, the more he is aware of the threats to the nation and the more inclined he is to develop beliefs that allow him to act on those feelings. Significant differences in beliefs throughout the world promote the search for the origin of these beliefs, which emphasize differences in the perception of a foreign power. In social identity theory, people find their personal characteristics in the groups they belong to. The theoretical view here is that as much of a person’s sense of self is bound to the nation, he will be more sensitive to threats and opportunities from other countries. In addition, it was found that different emotions produce different behavioral patterns. For example, anger leads to readiness to attack, fear creates caution, love of things that fuel cooperation, etc. when feelings of inadequacy and intimidation become stronger, a common belief promoted by the image of the enemy. Fear and anger are not the only emotions that motivate beliefs but the desire to take advantage of these beliefs.

Israel and Palestine – Conflict

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is a perfect example of how prejudice and other cognitive biases can impair one’s view of their opponent and hinder him/her from reaching an amicable solution. Israel, the only Jewish state in the world, is located near the Mediterranean Sea. Palestine refers to the territory as the land

controlled by the Arab population that hails from Israel. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is over who gets control over the land and how it must be controlled. Their political conflict began in the early 20th century.

Jews were fleeing prosecution in Europe and wanted to establish a national homeland in what was then an Arab and Muslim majority territory in the Ottoman Empire, controlled by the Imperial Crown of British. The Arabs resisted since they thought the land rightfully belonged to them. Earlier, the United Nations planned to give each group a part of the land, however, this failed miserably. Today’s territorial divide is a result of the 1948 and 1967 wars. The 1967 war left West Bank and Gaza (both territories were home to large Palestinian population) in control of Israel. Presently, the West Bank is controlled by the Palestinian Authority and is under Israeli occupation. This leads to a situation where Israeli troops enforce strict security restrictions on Palestinian movements and activities. Gaza is controlled by Hamas (Islamist fundamentalist party) and is under Israeli blockade. The peace negotiations between these two groups fell apart in July 2014 and the conflict escalated to a full-on war between Israel and Hamas.

What is Nakba and the problems in negotiation?

The 1948 war uprooted 7,000,000 Palestinians from their homes. This created a refugee crisis that hasn’t been resolved to date. This mass eviction is what was called “Nakba” (Arabic for catastrophe). Palestinians looked at this war as a premeditated effort by Jews to ethnically cleanse Palestine of Arabs. Since 1948, the core Palestinian demand in peace negotiations was justice for these refugees. This was most commonly in the form of the “right to return” to the homes they left in 1948. However, Israel can’t accept this “right to return” without abandoning either its Jewish or democratic identity because adding 7 million Palestinian refugees to Israel’s population would make Jews a minority. Another major problem in negotiations is how to find a way to get justice for the refugees that both Israeli and Palestinian people can accept.

How are other Middle Eastern countries handling this conflict?

Egypt- Egypt’s 1978 peace treaty with Israel, the first signed by any Arab state, is underwritten by massive amounts of American aid to both Egypt and Israel. The treaty forbids Egypt from forming a military presence in the bordering Sinai Peninsula, which helped militant and criminal groups flourish there.

Syria- The Syrian government is still quite hostile to Israel. Syria is aligned with Iran, Israel’s greatest adversary in the region today.

Lebanon- Lebanon is home to Hezbollah, a virulently anti-Israel Shia Islamist group funded by Iran. Hezbollah is a major force in Lebanese politics, so Lebanon is unlikely to play any role in Israeli-Palestinian negotiations in the near term.

Jordan: Israel’s eastern neighbour both has a peace treaty with Israel and houses the largest concentration of Palestinian refugees. It’s also one of Israel’s neighbours where Palestinians have full citizenship rights.

Iran- The Iranian government believes Israel is fundamentally illegitimate and supports the most hard-line anti-Israeli Arab factions. Israel sees Iran’s nuclear program as a direct and existential threat, and Iran feels the same about Israel’s officially undeclared nuclear weapons. Iran has provided significant military financial backing to Hezbollah, Hamas, and Syria.

Turkey- Long on good terms with Israel, Turkey has become increasingly pro-Palestinian in recent years. Its Islamist Prime Minister has positioned himself as a champion of the Palestinian cause for ideological, domestic, and geopolitical reasons. Israeli-



Turkish conflict over an Israeli raid on a Turkish aid mission to Gaza severed diplomatic relations between the two countries, and relations still have not been formally normalized.

Saudi Arabia- The kingdom donates hundreds of millions of dollars to the Palestinian Authority and is the driving force behind an Arab League peace plan floated as an alternative to traditional Israeli Palestinian negotiations. Though Saudi Arabia has yet to recognize Israel, the two nations' mutual hostility toward Iran has built an unprecedented working relationship between the Saudi and Israeli governments.

Cognitive dimensions of the Arab Israeli conflict:

A study conducted by Michael Inbar and Ephraim Yuchtman-Yaar in 1982 explains the cognitive dimensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It involved Arab and Jewish respondents living both in the Middle East and the United States. The study consisted of three classes of variables. They were:

- Independent variable: Individual's background characteristics
- Intervening variable: Cognitive dimensions of the conflict
- Dependent variable: Attitudes and expectations about the conflict

Fourteen elements were considered for this study. They are:

- Military Strength, World Opinion, Population Size, American Opinion, Arab Unity, World Jewry, Economic Strength, Justice, U.S. Influence, Passage of Time, Russian Influence, God's

Will, European Influence and Leadership

The findings signified that there were sharp differences between Israelis and other Arabs. These findings reflect cultural differences between two societies, either or both with respect to basic optimism and different levels of modernization. Israelis tend to emphasize more tangible resources like military strength and population size, whereas others attach greater importance to less tangible factors like justice, God's will, etc. When nationality and patriotism were tested, it was found that people who were more patriotic were biased towards their nation and favoured elements like military strength, economic strength, influence, and leadership. This was because people who are more patriotic are overconfident in the abilities of their country. This created an information asymmetry and impaired their judgement. Israelis devoted to their country favoured the establishment of a completely Jewish state and ignored the atrocities committed by Israelis on Palestinians. However, Israelis with a much broader perspective of the world favoured continuing the negotiation process so both parties could benefit. They also acknowledged the atrocities committed by Israelis on Palestinians.

It is thus believed that attachment to the nation associates positively with more intense emotional appraisals of the international situation. In other words, as attachment increases so do the judgment that potentially threatening situations represent bigger problems. As national attachment increases so will the inclination to attribute defensive intentions to countries that are liked and aggressive intentions to countries that are disliked. The national attachment and the perceived instrumental utility of foreign countries increase beliefs about the importance of nationalism in the country will decline as will assessment of the popular support for those leaders opposing the observer's country.

COMPARING INDIA'S LOOK EAST AND ACT EAST POLICIES



ANAMITRA BANERJEE

The Look East Policy was launched in the year 1992 by Indian Prime Minister PV Narsimha Rao, a year after the disintegration of the USSR (Soviet Union) in 1991. The Dissolution of the USSR ended the Cold War. India was heavily dependent on the Soviet Union. After its fall, India faced an economic crisis. Therefore, it turned towards the countries of South East Asia. India saw the immense scope of economic growth in South East Asia and also noticed that Japan and China emerged as key entities in the region. This policy was continued even after the reign of PV Narsimha Rao (1991-96). It was successfully enforced by Atal Bihari Vajpayee (1998-2004) and Manmohan Singh (2004-2014). The Look East Policy had four broad objectives ever since it was initiated:

- Regional Economic Integration,
- Reform and Liberalization
- Sustained Economic Growth
- Development of North-East India.

Since the early 1990s, India started focusing on economic cooperation with the East and Southeast Asian countries. This geographical shift in focus area was primarily due to the success of the East Asian economies, especially the Asian Tigers. The Look East Policy had two phases, the first being on the trade and investment process, and the second phase expanded the geographical focus to Australia and East Asia.

The Look East Policy also focuses on sub-regional cooperation:

- **BIMSTEC –**

It was launched on the 6th of June 1997. Being a sector-driven grouping, cooperation within BIMSTEC had initially focused on six sectors in 1997 (trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism, and fisheries) and expanded in 2008 to incorporate agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people-to-people contact, and climate change.

- **Mekong Ganga Cooperation –**

The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is an initiative by six countries – India and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam for cooperation in tourism, culture, education, as well as transport and communications. It is named after the Mekong River and River Ganga (both of which are civilizational rivers).

- **Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Regional Economic Forum (BCIM)**

Also known as the Kunming Initiative, the BCIM was formed in 1999 to promote trade and economic development in the sub-region stretching from southwest China to eastern India ('Kunming to Kolkata') via Myanmar, India's northeast region (NER), and Bangladesh.

- **Free Trade Area (India-ASEAN)**

It was signed in October 2003. Economic co-operation activities

under the AIFTA are now being undertaken on agriculture, fisheries, and forestry; services; mining and energy; science and technology; transport and infrastructure; manufacturing; human resource development; and other sectors such as handicrafts, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and intellectual property rights.

Apart from the above, the Look East Policy has enabled India to become a sectoral dialogue partner with ASEAN in 1992. India is also a member of the ARF (ASEAN Regional Forum) since 1996. Other Projects that have boosted India's Look East Policy are the Trans Asian Highway from Singapore to Istanbul (via India), Trans Asian Railway from Delhi to Hanoi (Vietnam), and a Trans-National Gas Pipeline between Myanmar, Bangladesh, and India.

Challenges to the Look East Policy-

Another important element of the Look East Policy was the development of India's the North Eastern States. The North-East Indian Region shares its border with Myanmar and Bangladesh both being the gateway to South East Asia. However, certain challenges are faced by the "Look East Policy", especially in the North East:

The state of Manipur in particular within the North-Eastern region is badly affected by the "Golden Triangle" where drug addiction is spreading like wildfire. the number of drug addicts has risen from just 600 in 1988 to 31,000 in 1996 and 40,000 in 2002. In recent years, the Chinese expansionist economy has drawn India's neighbors into its economic arena. Myanmar's trade with China has grown more rapidly than that with India. Trade Between Bangladesh and China is more than the trade between India and Bangladesh. This is a serious challenge faced by the Look East Policy.

The second Challenge facing the Look East Policy is that India has very limited success in handling ethno-nationalist movements such as the Bodo Front in upper Assam. Secondly, the northeast is also home to scores of ethnic rebellions. Myanmar's Rakhine State and Kachin State are battlegrounds for the Karen people and the Tatmadaw (Myanmar Military Forces). In such a situation the Indian Projects (such as the Kaladan Multi-Modal Project) may get stagnated or be destroyed.

The Third Challenge comes from the Siliguri Corridor in West Bengal. This place is also termed Chicken's Neck. It joins the North Eastern Region to mainland India. The main problem that persists here is elements of LW (Left Wing Extremism) and the Gorkhaland Rebel Movement towards the Sikkim and Darjeeling zones. Siliguri region is often faced with strikes and "bandhs". The Naga Insurgency will also prove to be a hindrance in the projects as the former head hunters demand autonomy from the Indian mainland.

Support from Bangladesh is of extreme importance. As long as Bangladesh promotes friendly relations and encourages connectivity, the projects under the Look East Policy will be fulfilled and completed.

THE ACT EAST POLICY

The Act East Policy launched in November 2014, is considered to be an upgrade of the Look East Policy. It was unveiled by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi at the 12th ASEAN Summit in Myanmar. It was enforced by the NDA Government who came to power in the year 2014. The Act East Policy is focused on the 4C's which are Culture, Commerce, Connectivity, and Capacity Building.

Initiatives under the Act East Policy-

- **Agartala-Akhaura Rail Project –**

This will be the first rail link from the North Eastern Region to Bangladesh. This railway link will connect Gangasagar in Bangladesh to Nischintapur in India and from Nischintapur to Agartala Railway Station. The Ministry of Development of the North East will pay for a 5.47 km track on the Indian Side whereas the remaining rail track in Bangladesh will be financed by the



Ministry of External Affairs.

- **Asian Trilateral Highway-**

This Highway starts from India and goes to Thailand via Myanmar. This will connect Moreh (India) to Bagan (Myanmar) and Mae Sot (Thailand). This project will boost trade and commerce in the India ASEAN Free Trade Area. This highway is 3660kms long and recently, Bangladesh has expressed its interest in the project.

- **Kaladan Multi-Modal Transport Project-**

This project connects Sittwe Port in Myanmar to India's Myanmar Border. This has been created to ensure a multi-modal platform for cargo shipments from the eastern ports to Myanmar and the Northeastern parts of the country through Myanmar. It shall open sea routes and promote Economic Development in the North Eastern States. The project will reduce the need to transport from the volatile narrow Siliguri Corridor (Chicken's Neck).

- **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Program (RCEP)-**

It is a free trade agreement between 10 members of ASEAN and five FTA partners (Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, and South Korea). Although India is an FTA partner of ASEAN it withdrew from the RCEP in 2019 stating that it would negatively impact Indian citizens

- **Challenges to Act East Policy –**

The first challenge to the Act East Policy comes from religion. Most of the ASEAN countries practice Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity. Due to "Hindu Majoritarianism" the civil society in Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia have been affected. Secondly, due to inter-religious tensions, the Indian "Buddhist Diplomacy" has failed to garner support

The third challenge comes from the Covid-19. India had suffered a lot and was the worst hit during the pandemic. In Contrast, China being the epicenter of the Covid-19 pandemic handled the situation very effectively. There are instances of pro-Chinese sentiment among the Chinese communities in the ASEAN Region.

- **WHY IS THE ACT EAST POLICY MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE LOOK EAST POLICY?**

Economic Aspect

The Act East Policy was launched at a time when India's economy was much better than that of the Look East Policy in 1991. The Act East Policy had a much greater focus on defense cooperation whereas this was the lacking factor in the Look East Policy. Also, the development of the North Eastern Region of India was the heavy focus of the Act East Policy. Under the Act East Policy, North East is considered as a gateway to Southeast Asian Countries. In the Look, East Policy North East India was in focus but efforts were minimal when compared to the Act East Policy.

Geopolitical Aspect

The Act East had a much strategical concept. India had formed relations not just with South East Asia but towards countries like South Korea and Japan who funded these infrastructural projects. Moreover, this policy was comparatively benevolent geopolitically for India. There was a greater focus on the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) Nations like Australia, Japan, the USA, and India herself. Relationships and strategic partnerships were forged with the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam to check the dominance of China. The dominance of China was countered at two oceans: South China Seas and the Indian Ocean.

Cultural Aspect

When examined from the lenses of Soft Power diplomacy, The Act East Policy gave more importance to cultural, religious, linguistic exchanges. For example, the civilizational and cultural links date back several thousand years (from prehistoric times) Indian Merchants brought Hinduism and Buddhism to the region. Hindu Kingdoms were found in Sumatra, Bali, and the Philippines. The Hindu Temple Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Barabudar temple in Java bear the testimony.

The focus of the Look East Policy was only limited to that of trade and investment. Whereas the Act East Policy is focused not only just economic cooperation but also had a security dimension. The Look East Policy had developed relations only with the Southeast Asia Countries. The Act East Policy also gave attention to the East Asian Countries as well.

Investment Aspect

Under the Act East Policy, countries like South Korea and Japan had made various investments in India. For example, The Japanese investments in India include The Bullet Train, pharmaceuticals, telecom, smart cities, chemicals, etc. Japan and India have institutionalized 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue. Japan has also agreed to support Indian initiatives such as Digital India, Skill India, and Make in India. South Korea on the other hand has a huge presence in India particularly in the automobile sector (Hyundai) and in the electronics sector (Samsung and LG) as well. South Korean FDI to India has steadily increased in recent years, reaching US\$ 5.71 billion by the end of 2018.

The Look East and Act East Policy have benefitted and improved the stance and position of India externally. India under both policies has achieved considerable success be it geopolitically, internally, externally. However, each policy comes with its pros and cons. This needs to be addressed before formulating and implementing any new venture or step. Despite the best motives and intentions of the Look and Act East Policy, India's image and standing have suffered. Therefore, Indian Diplomacy and diplomats must take a fresh look and modify the existing policies and make them tailor-made to suit India's interests domestically as well as internationally.

The Act East Policy is much more effective and comprehensive than the Look East Policy. This does not mean that the Look East Policy should be neglected. Behind the success and foundational base of the Act East Policy was the Look East Policy.

ONSET OF THE SUMMMER SEASON

