

ASPIRE



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A monthly newsletter covering government policies and initiatives

COVER STORY

J&K WITNESSES COMPLETION OF 65000 PROJECTS IN 3 YEARS

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In a first, J&K Govt facilitates nomads' journey to high land pastures

'Transit accommodations coming up at 8 places at a cost of Rs 28 cr'

Srinagar: Come summer in Kashmir, nomadic population of Jammu and Kashmir start moving towards the valley for onward trekking to high pastures. Kashmir offers the best and stimulant grazing for the livestock, which keeps roaming whatever the weather conditions prevail on higher reaches.

Thus far, the movement of shepherds and cattle breeders used to be a common phenomenon in Jammu areas up to Khanabal via nearly 290 km national highway. However, the UT administration of Jammu and Kashmir, for the first time, put a halt to laborious exercise of moving over vehicularly congested roads and deployed 40 Road Transport Corporation trucks for onward journey of cattle and cattle breeders up to the high pastures.

Every year by ending March, thousands of nomads begin their annual seasonal journey with lakhs of sheep and goats from Jammu region to reach the Kashmir valley. These families embark on their journey towards the alpine pastures for grazing during the summer before returning to warmer districts of Jammu region in October as the temperature goes down.

The hard journey from Jammu on foot to greener pastures of Kashmir used to consume lot of precious time for nomads leading to financial loss and physical strain. The hardships of these nomads further aggravated over the years due to dwindling number of primary source of transportation, horses. Transportation of their household goods and cattle to the upper reaches through tricks and load carriers was a long pending demand of these nomads before the administration.

On the directions of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, the department initiated a special project envisaging a transhumant support system including transit accommodations and transport facilities for the migratory population.

In line with the announcement made by Lieutenant Governor to minimize hardship being faced by the tribals during seasonal migration, the Tribal Affairs Department procured a fleet of 40 trucks for transporting around 30,000 families from Jammu to Kashmir via Mughal road and National Highway-44 connecting Jammu with Srinagar. These trucks were procured by the department through J&K

Road Transport Corporation.

"This initiative has been taken on the direction of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha who has announced various steps for welfare of tribals of J&K," Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department said during the flagging of trucks. He said that this initiative will minimize the hardships being faced by nomads during seasonal migration adding that this is for the first time in the history of J&K that livestock of tribals is being transported to highland pastures in trucks.

Pertinently, Jammu and Kashmir government had earlier announced provision of transport/freight services for the migratory tribal population during the annual migration to highland pastures. There was persistent demand from the migratory tribal community that they face a lot of hardships during migration due to traffic jams and other hindrances and to make their journey smoother they should be provided some transportation mode.

It was observed that sometimes due to harsh weather conditions there used to occur huge losses of livestock and other damages to tribal families. The budget announcement made by the Finance Minister mentioned that transportation viz-a-viz transit facilities will be provided to the migratory tribal population.

The transportation system put in place by the Tribal Affairs Department will reduce the travel time from 20-30 days on foot to 1-2 days while it will also help in smooth management of traffic. These trucks have been deployed both on National Highway-44 and Mughal Road. More trucks are being inducted this year by the department to ensure coverage of 100% families.

Lieutenant Governor has committed to provide transportation support and transit facilities to 100 per cent migratory tribal population on National Highway and Mughal Road.

Meanwhile, funds to the tune of Rs 6.80 crore have been released in favour of JKSRITC for procurement of trucks to provide transportation facilities to the migratory tribal families.

It is pertinent to mention here that the tribal affairs department is establishing transit accommodations at eight different locations for the convenience of migratory tribal population at a cost of Rs 28 crore and two of them are nearing completion.





Mission Youth satiating aspirations of Jammu and Kashmir Youth

SRINAGAR: “Young people should be respected, valued and listened to, be supported and encouraged in building personal and social relationships, developing their innate abilities and talents for their own benefit and benefit of the society at large”, envisioned the J&K Youth Mission initiative of UT government.

Implementation of Mission Youth in Jammu and Kashmir has proved to be instrumental in satiating aspirations of youth of the UT facilitating them with a perfect platform to exploit their job potential to the fullest.

The Mission was intended to simultaneously achieve the twin goals of harnessing the rich demographic dividend and transforming youth of J&K into ambassadors of innovation, peace and development through systematic interventions for Youth Engagement and Outreach under six domains including livelihood generation, education/skill development, financial assistance, counseling/theory, sports and recreation.

To meet aspirations of youth, J&K administration has taken numerous steps towards creating infrastructure, schemes and policies to speed up their socio-economic development under Mission Youth.

Jammu and Kashmir is bestowed with a predominantly young population with about 69 % of the people being below the age of 35 years. In order to provide a platform for holistic implementation of all youth engagement and outreach initiatives and to bring the interests and empowerment of youth to the centre of policy making, government of Jammu and Kashmir has rolled out a pioneering initiative ‘Mission Youth’.

Under Mumkin scheme, unemployed youth are facilitated to procure small commercial vehicles, on subsidized rates, to establish a sustainable livelihood line in the transport sector. Also, a module has been developed on JK-e Services portal for operating the scheme digitally in a complete transparent manner.

As a special incentive under this scheme, Mission Youth is contributing 0.80 lakh or 10% of On-Road Price of Vehicle (whichever is Minimum) per beneficiary and an equivalent amount is also contributed by the vehicle manufacturers. Mission Youth has tied up with reputed vehicle manufacturers as scheme partners for providing the best in class options of vehicles to the youth. Pertinently, discretion to choose type of vehicle is left to the youth under scheme guidelines.

A dedicated portal has been launched by Mission Youth in collaboration with Vision India to connect youth of J&K

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

J&K administration has taken many steps to create infrastructure, formulate schemes and policies to speed up economic development and meet the aspirations of Youth so that they can contribute to society and achieve self growth.

Mission Youth under its AVSAR (Connect to Opportunities Initiative) has signed a MoU with Vision India for providing job opportunities to the youth of J&K. A dedicated portal of employment opportunities for youth of J&K has been provisioned to facilitate them in getting the best jobs.

In its endeavor towards empowering women socially and economically, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, launched Tejaswini scheme for implementation in the Union Territory. This is a start up funding programme for adolescents and young women of the UT making them empowered and self dependent through their own business ventures.

The broad aim of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to young women of 18 to 35 years of age for setting up of gainful self-employment ventures, suited to their skills, training, aptitude and local conditions. Under the scheme, female entrepreneurs shall be facilitated to avail financial assistance under Mudra from J&K Bank to the extent of Rs 5.00 lakh. Mission Youth, J&K shall provide an amount of Rs. 50,000 or 10% of project cost as subsidy. Besides, interest component of the loan shall also be sponsored by Mission Youth as special incentive and repayment of loan will technically be interest free for the young female entrepreneurs who apply for assistance under the scheme.

Mission Youth is focused on continuously encouraging, engaging and mobilizing young volunteers of J&K to support the government efforts towards socio-economic transformation of Jammu and Kashmir.

Another initiative under Mission Youth is Youth Clubs. The youth volunteers of these Youth Clubs are being given training on all aspects of government schemes. They will be part of emergency and crisis plans and will be involved in the planning and decision making regarding volunteer led activities to be done in Panchayats or wards.

The Youth Clubs are also provided special incentives in the form of grant-in-aid to support their activities. Youth Engagement programs have been convened in all districts through these youth clubs and more than 2 lakh youth have been associated with the programme.

Jmu-Bla rail project to catalyze accelerated progress, prosperity in J&K

SRINAGAR: The Union Territory Government has said that Jammu-Baramulla railway line project once completed will act as a catalyst towards accelerated development, progress, and prosperity in the region.

This all-weather and cost-effective connectivity shall prove to be a boon for economy of J&K besides catalyzing industrialization, movement of raw material, trade, tourism and employment generation as well.

Sustainable connectivity to this region is very important for national security, prosperity and socio-economic development of the region. Despite vast resources, Kashmir valley lagged behind in terms of development due to lack of railway connectivity. After the abrogation of Article 370, central and UT governments made serious efforts to establish rail connectivity to the region for which a number of railway projects have been initiated which are under execution in different stages.

The Central government has declared the project as National Project in view of its significance for the nation. Institutions like IIT Delhi, IIT Roorkee, Geographical Survey of India and DRDO are providing expertise in the project planning and its implementation. This route will also see construction of world's highest railway bridge and India's first cable-stayed Railway Bridge.

After completion, this line will be an all-weather convenient and cost-effective mass transportation system and will act as a catalyst for overall development of the northernmost alpine region of the country.

This project has great significance for security and socio-economic development. It can play important role in rapid industrialization, movement of raw materials and finished products from J&K and encourage trade and tourism in the region apart from providing opportunity for employment, an official said. Similarly, it will be a boon for development of agriculture, horticulture and floriculture of this area, he added.

The construction of first 3 phases of the railway project has been

completed and the line is operational between Banihal – Baramulla in Kashmir Valley and Jammu-Udhampur-Katra in Jammu region. Besides, work on intervening 111 km of Katra-Banihal section is going on which is the most challenging portion for construction due to its geology and extensive Riverine system with deep gorges.

According to a senior official of Northern Railways, Kashmir valley would be connected to Jammu and rest of the country during 2023, providing efficient connectivity to Kashmir valley with other parts of the country through rail network.

The main tunnel of T-49, the longest tunnel of Indian Railways, between Sumber and Arpinchala station of Katra-Banihal section of Udhampur- Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project has been connected successfully.

After completion of this project, it would be a splendid project of engineering of 21st century and this project will write a new story of development, progress, prosperity and security of the nation.

The world's highest bridge being built over Chenab in the Union Territory will be completed by September this year.

“As you all know that the world's highest railway bridge over Chenab is being built. It will be completed in September this year which will fulfill our motive of connecting Kashmir to Kanyakumari,” Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said.

The Chenab Bridge, the world's highest rail bridge that will connect Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country by rail route, is designed to withstand earthquakes of magnitude eight on the Richter Scale.

The work for Reasi railway station in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, a part of Jammu-Bara is in the final leg. The concrete slabs have been laid at bridge number 39 built over 105 ft gorge. Of all the pillars installed for the bridge, height of the middle one is more than that of Qutab Minar. The height of pylon above the foundation is 193 metre. The bridge is 331 metre above sea level.

NAS 2021 Report Card puts J&K schools ahead of National Average

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir has registered an impressive performance in the sample-based National Achievement Survey (NAS) conducted by the Ministry of Education for classes 3, 5, 8 and 10 on November 12 last year.

The survey, which took place in all 733 districts across the country, was a competency-based national-level large-scale assessment that aimed to provide information about students' learning achievement so that a system-level reflection on the effectiveness of school education in the country could be conducted.

Language, Mathematics, Science, and Social Science were chosen as subjects for assessment in classes 3 and 5, while Environmental Studies was added for class 8 and Social Science and Modern Indian Language for class 10.

A total number of 79256 students and 16260 teachers in 3650 schools from all the 20 districts of J&K UT participated in the survey.

Director State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), Prof Veena Pandita, while congratulating the School Education Department and commenting on the report card said that the efforts of everyone involved in the education system helped significantly in putting J&K ahead of the national average in the recently declared NAS results.

“I'd like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Principal Secretary B K Singh, Director School Education Jammu, Director School Edu-

cation Kashmir, Project Director Samagra Shiksha, Chief Education Officers and the NAS team from SCERT for their efforts to make this survey a success,” Prof Pandita said. “All this would have not been possible without the ever sincere and dedicated efforts of our coordinators at the district level, representatives from the CBSE, Principals of the DIETs (District Nodal Officers), field investigators and observers.”

SCERT had taken a slew of measures, particularly in light of the NAS-17 results, which were not encouraging.

Prior to the NAS survey, the SCERT performed a UT-level assessment of classes 3, 5, and 8 on September 30, 2021, with the goal of discovering learning gaps created by the Covid-19 epidemic.

“The survey, which was performed throughout all of J&K UT's districts, served as a dress rehearsal for the NAS,” stated G H Reshi, Academic Officer. “Because the survey was conducted along the same lines as the NAS, the task ahead of us became relatively easy.”

The SCERT gave unused survey question sheets to students from time to time to familiarize them with the evaluation methodology, he said.

Director Pandita said that the results would help us to comprehend effectively the students' performance as per the different learning outcomes vis-à-vis the contextual variables. She urged the teachers to work harder in the future to improve the performance and quality further.

Tourist Villages Dev Prog gains momentum in J&K

‘5 villages within Dal Lake in Srinagar to be developed as Tourist Villages’

Srinagar: The Tourist Villages Development programme under Mission Youth initiative, which aims at developing 75 villages having distinction in terms of scenic beauty, adventurous terrain, art and cultural, history and archaeology, is gaining tremendous momentum with heavy tourist influx thronging the new destinations.

According to Mission Youth official, broad objectives of the programme are to develop new tourism destinations which will integrate social, cultural and spiritual characteristics with economic contours having requisite infrastructural facilities for tourists within such selected villages. The activities to be covered under the programme included promotion of local hospitality, adventure and sports facilities, construction of budget accommodation, tourist complexes, wayside amenities, Tourist Facilitation Centres, special tourism projects, sound and light recreational facilities besides eco friendly transportation facilities.

The villages to be covered under the programme are being selected on the basis of their rural tourism potential in consultation with Tourism Department by an expert committee of Mission Youth.

The scheme has twin benefit of promoting rural tourism and employment generation for local youth. The gamut of financial assistance worth Rs 10 lakh including Rs 8.50 lakh from banking partner, Mission youth J&K will provide an amount of Rs 1.5 lakh or 15% of project cost (whichever is minimum) as special upfront incentive (subsidy) under the scheme. Moreover, the beneficiary must be unemployed and registered with the concerned District Employment and Counseling Centre.

The initiative is destined to promote home stays across the UT and will strengthen the rural economy in the region, turn youth into entrepreneurs besides empowering women by offering them numerous opportunities of employment.

The J&K administration through Mission Youth has embarked on a task to rejuvenate and transform more than 75 villages in the Union Territory by promoting tourism and giving sustainable employment to youth.

The government has launched this program to celebrate and commemorate 75 years of Independence under Azadi Ka

Amrit Mahotsav under the Mission Youth which will work towards giving a facelift to 75 villages that are already famous for their historical background, picturesque landscape and cultural importance.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, had said that administration will recognize the uniqueness of each village and showcase the landscape, foster the indigenous knowledge system and promote cultural diversity and heritage of these villages.

“It has been learnt that the initiative has also been launched keeping in view the potential of J&K for film shooting purposes. The initiative is also aimed to promote shooting of films and offering financial aid to the villages for their sustainable development,” he said.

LG maintained that “All villages which are part of the initiative will also be provided a digital footprint. This move is also aimed at providing maximum job opportunities to youth from different backgrounds and ensuring their participation in the policies that have an impact on their lives”.

As per officials, the initiative of Tourist Village Network has the potential and propensity to mobilize the diverse geographical and socio-economic landscape of the Union Territory.

“There are several regions in J&K which despite having greater tourism potential have not been able to garner requisite attention due to infrastructural bottlenecks. Destinations which lag behind in sphere of tourism infrastructure, can overcome the downsides by introducing home stays as a means of accommodation facilities for the tourists which do not require heavy investment.”

It is important to note that the government started the movement of promoting homestay tourism in the UT by launching Panchari, a village in Udhampur district with mesmerizing beauty as the first tourist village with homestays.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to develop 5 tourist villages within Dal Lake in Srinagar which included Kachri Mohalla, Sofi Mohalla, Tinda Mohallah, Akhoun Mohalla and a Vegetable market. These villages will have all basic facilities for inhabitants as well as tourists and local visitors. These villages will also provide homestay facilities to tourists.

CULTIVATION OF LAVENDER CHANGES FORTUNES OF FARMERS IN J&K

‘Doda district achieves tremendous results under Aroma Mission’

Srinagar: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has said that cultivation of lavender has changed fortunes of farmers in Jammu and Kashmir under ‘Aroma Mission’ or ‘Purple Revolution’, an initiative of Centre government towards transforming lives of UT’s farmers community.

Pertinently, Purple or Lavender Revolution was launched in 2016 by the Union Ministry of Science & Technology through the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research’s (CSIR) Aroma Mission. The aim of the mission is to support domestic aromatic crop-based agro-economy by moving from imported aromatic oils to homegrown varieties.

Lavender cultivation is practiced in almost all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir. Under the mission, first-time farmers were given free lavender saplings while those who had cultivated lavender before were charged Rs 5-6 per sapling.

Farmers are happy with farming of unconventional aromatic plants under Aroma Mission.

The mission promotes cultivation of aromatic crops for essential oils that are in great demand by the aroma industry.

In J&K, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu (IIIM Jammu) are the two bodies responsible for taking the Aroma Mission forward. The CSIR Aroma Mission is envisaged to bring transformative change in the aroma sector through desired interventions in the areas of agriculture, processing and product development for fuelling the growth of aroma industry and rural employment.

It is expected to enable Indian farmers and the aroma industry to become global leaders in the production and export of some other essential oils in the pattern of menthol mint.

According to the Lavendar farmers, the selling of at least one litre of its oil fetches them Rs 10,000.

The farmers say that lavender grown over one hectare of land gives them a minimum of 40 litre of lavender oil.

Lavender water, which separates from lavender oil, is used to make incense sticks. Hydrosol, which is formed after distillation from the flowers, is used to make soaps and room fresheners.

An official of IIM-Jammu farmers get help from IIIM-Jammu to sell their produce. Many private companies also procure lavender extracts from the farmers.

Notably, Doda district is leading the way and four distillation units have been set up by CSIR-IIIM Jammu in the district. Farmers from remote areas of district Doda reach these plants for extraction of lavender oil.

More than 800 progressive farmers of Doda have adopted aromatic cultivation which is now proved out to be profitable.

On February 9, 2021, CSIR-IIIM-Jammu announced Aroma Mission phase 2 after the success of the first phase during a grand launch function. The mission was aimed at to increase lavender cultivation to 1,500 hectares till 2024. Farmers from Uttarakhand, Nagaland and Assam attended the event. Impressed by the success of Doda’s lavender farmers, the Uttarakhand authorities invited some of them to train their farmers.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has formed an FPO (Farmer Producer Organization) at many places to provide end-to-end support and services to the Lavender farmers, and cover technical services, marketing, processing and other aspects of cultivation inputs.

To speed up production of lavender saplings for meeting the growing demand, the department of agriculture production and farmers welfare has sponsored naturally ventilated semi high-tech poly greenhouses, where saplings will be grown scientifically which will eventually help in bringing more area under lavender farming in less time.



Filmmakers making comeback to enchanting places of J&K



Srinagar: Filmmakers are making a beeline for shootings in the scenic splendor of locales of Jammu and Kashmir especially after recent launch of maiden Film Policy by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, which has incentivized film shootings in the Union Territory, said a government official.

In January 2021, Bollywood's big banners arrived in Kashmir giving a major shot in the arm to tourism sector which was facing huge losses.

The visiting Bollywood team was comprised of a 24 member Bollywood delegation including members of the Ajay Devgun Films, the Sanjay Dutt Productions, the Reliance Entertainment, the Rohit Shetty Films, the Zee Studios, the Adhikari Brothers and SAB (Marathi), the Endemol, Director Raj Kumar Hirani and the Excel Entertainment besides several representatives from the Producers Guild, Mumbai.

"Top production houses have visited various locations in the Union Territory having the charming natural beauty and potential of shooting variety of subjects. Kashmir has been receiving good response from filmmakers since the opening of tourism here in addition to the regional entertainment houses for shooting song sequences and commercial advertisements," Director, Tourism, Kashmir, an official said.

Bollywood directors have chosen Kashmir as the filming ground for many of their movies due to its picturesque landscapes. The shooting of many popular movies like Highway, Phantom, Fitoor, Bajrangi Bhaijaan, Raazi, Haider, 3 Idiots and more happened in Kashmir.

"We will bring Kashmir back to the film industry the way it was in 1960s," said film Producer Siddharth Roy Kapur on his recent visit to Kashmir, during the Gulmarg Winter Festival 2021. The three-day festival which commenced on February 6, 2021, saw the presence of Bollywood celebrities like Siddharth Roy Kapur, Vidya Balan, Neelam Kothari and Arbaaz Khan.

Bollywood actor Neelam Kothari asserted that she will encourage her colleagues, producers and directors of the industry to shoot their films in Kashmir valley especially in picturesque Gulmarg.

"Kashmir is very near to my heart as my first picture "Jawaani" was shot in beautiful locations of Srinagar, Gulmarg and Pahalgam", the gorgeous actress asserted on the sidelines of "Gulmarg Winter Festival" organized by the Army to celebrate 75th year of Indian Independence "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahtsav".

She said the Bollywood film industry can shoot their films in the beautiful locations of Kashmir very happily and comfortably as there is no fear or threat and the atmosphere has entirely changed.

Recently, Sara Ali Khan, daughter of actor Saif Ali Khan visited the Valley twice in the last nine months, her January trip being the latest. Sara has been posting her videos and pictures about Kashmir all over social media.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, at the launch of the Union Territory's Film Policy, had said: "It has been worked out to facilitate overall growth of film industry in the region including setting up of a film development council and revival of closed cinema halls."

The policy, launched at a star-studded event in presence of actor Aamir Khan and filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani, aims at establishing Jammu and Kashmir as the first choice for film shooting destination for the filmmakers.

Actor Aamir Khan has called the Jammu & Kashmir's Film Policy-2021 a "moment of happiness" for the entire film industry.

"I want to congratulate Manoj Sinha and am also thankful to him for this Film Policy. It is a moment of happiness for the film industry and we will get several facilities and it will make shooting films here easy. I wish the whole team all the very best," Khan said.

The 56-year-old actor also thanked the people of the valley for showering them with love.

Tollywood filmmakers are equally enthusiastic to shoot in Kashmir and capture the breathtaking landscapes in their movies. Filmmakers Kannada superstar Puneeth Rajkumar shot for the film James in February 2021. South film actress Priyaman's team also shot last month in remote areas of Doodhpathri with new entrants Kiara and Sonal.

Another Kannada actor Rakshit Shetty shot for film 777 Charlie in November 2020. Also, Malayalam film Janeman was shot at various locations in Kashmir. Besides, renowned Telugu film star Bellamkonda Sai Sreenivas and Nabha Natesh shot for a film in January 2021.

"The shooting experience for James with Puneeth Rajkumar has been exhilarating and we enjoyed shooting in Kashmir," Chethan Kumar, director of the film James was quoted in media.

Top cinematographer and filmmaker, Ravi Varman, who had shot in Kashmir for the film Kaattru Veliyidai has said, "Kashmir is one of the most beautiful places in our country. Kashmiris are very friendly and they are like south Indians a lot."

South film actor and comedian known for his comic expressions, Ali Basha, who was recently shooting for a Telugu song in Kashmir said: "The south film industry should make a comeback to the enchanting valley for the shootings."

According to officials, the new Film Policy has been worked out to promote overall growth of film industry in the union territory, setting up of Jammu and Kashmir Film Development Council and providing hands on access to website for talent pool and all shooting destinations.

It will also facilitate the development of shooting locales, infrastructure for film screening, revival of closed cinema halls, upgrading existing cinema halls, encouraging setting up of multiplexes, destination marketing, organizing the J&K film festival, and restoration and preservation of films from the region, they added.

J&K registers significant achievement in reducing infant mortality

Registers 3 point decline from 20 to 17 per 1000 live births in single year, as per SRS report



Srinagar: The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has registered a tremendous decline in the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) during the last year.

The IMR has decreased from 20 to 17 in a single year much better than the national average of IMR which stands at 28 as per the Sample Registration System (SRS) 2020 report released by the Registrar General of India (RGI-SRS) today. The IMR is an important health indicator that shows the number of deaths of children up to one year of age per 1000 live births.

The National Health Mission (NHM) with the active support of the entire Health and Medical Education Department has put persistent & tireless efforts to provide essential neonatal care at Government health institutions across the Union Territory.

One of the comprehensive measures in this regard includes an action plan de-

vised by the Health & Medical Education Department with support from the Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare & Norway India Partnership Initiative in the form of Road Map for reducing IMR in the J&K UT in line with India Newborn Action Plan (INAP). The action plan is being implemented at all levels and focuses on community-based and facility-based interventions for accelerating the rate of decline in Infant Mortality through the strengthening of maternal & child health programmes.

Key health facility-based interventions that have been strengthened include upgradation of Facility Based Newborn Care Units, Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA), Skilled Birth Attendance (SBA), Universalization of essential newborn care & resuscitation, Early and exclusive breastfeeding etc. Special New-born Care Units (SNCU) have been established in 27 District / other equiva-

lent Hospitals, 4 Neonatal Intensive Care Units (NICUs) in GMCs, New Born Stabilization Units (NBSUs) in 65 Community Health Centers level and New Born Care Corners (NBCCs) in 264 delivery points with financial and technical support from National Health Mission.

The community-based interventions that are being strengthened include Home Based Newborn Care, Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP), Intensified Diarrhoea Control Fortnight (IDCF), National Deworming Day (NDD), VHNDs and IMNCI; Also, Home Based Care for Young Child (HBYC) has been rolled out in entire J&K UT. In addition, J&K UT is implementing some new measures through Dakshata, LaQshya, Family Participatory Care (FPC) & Kangaroo mother care (KMC), in Special Newborn Care Units (SNCU), Paediatric Emergency triage and treatment (ETAT) Centers, Obstetric ICU and High Dependency Units in Labour rooms.

Mission Director NHM, J&K, Yasin M. Choudhary has appreciated the efforts of Govt. Medical Colleges; Directorate of Health Services, Family Welfare, AYUSH all the field functionaries including doctors, paramedical staff, ASHA workers & Programme Management Unit staff for their continued efforts to improve maternal and newborn care in the UT which has resulted in a continuous decrease in Infant Mortality Rate. He has further stressed for sustained efforts in the future for better health care service delivery so as to further improve the maternal and child health indicators in the coming years.

India's first CTIED inaugurated at NIT Srinagar

Srinagar: India's first Centre for Technology Intervention for Elderly and Disabled (CTIED) inaugurated at the National Institute of Technology Srinagar

Addressing the members, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. (Dr.) Rakesh Sehgal said it is a proud moment for the entire institution that it is taking lead in this noble initiative. "It is a historic day and opportunity for our students to shape their future," he said.

Prof. Sehgal congratulated the CTIED team members

for the noble idea and informed them that no such initiative has been taken by any of the technical institutes, or universities in the entire country.

"Differently-abled persons are part and parcel of the society and we should help them through innovations and technology. I believe this centre will bridge the gap between community and technology," he said.

Prof. Sehgal also highlighted problems faced by the differently-abled persons and stated that technical innovations will lessen their problems and troubles. "If this centre will succeed in its motive that will be our biggest contribution to society," he said.

The Director NIT also suggested developing mechanisms in institute for the multi-disciplinary projects covering various fields of engineering. He urged CTIED members to encourage and motivate the students across various branches to work for technical innovation in this area.

'1500 girl students of J&K to get scholarships in tech-driven online skilling progs'



Higher Education Department, upGrad Foundation sign agreement

Srinagar: 1500 girl students from degree colleges across Jammu and Kashmir will be awarded scholarships to help them undertake high-quality and tech-driven online skilling programmes in cutting edge technologies like Digital Marketing and Data Science with Artificial Intelligence.

A proposal to this effect was jointly agreed upon by the Higher Education Department J&K and the upGrad Foundation-the philanthropic and not-for-profit division of Edtech company upGrad. The upGrad Foundation will be supporting this initiative through its 100 per cent fee waiver for tech driven programmes to help deserving and shortlisted female learners through its social impact initiative – Vidya Shakti Scholarships.

However, the initiative will not be confined only to online courses and scholarships but will aim to deliver an all-encompassing education experience with added benefits like one-on-one mentoring and learning and guidance through webinars and talks. It will also offer strong placement support in the form of internships and job opportunities facilitated by the upGrad Foundation for enabling positive career outcomes for the learners.

The initiative will educate and empower female learners coming from underserved sections and marginalised backgrounds and connect them with role models to guide and inspire them to follow in their footsteps. It will also provide 70 per cent scholarship for reputed PG courses in Management and Executive PG programme in Human Resource Management.

While access to Higher Education and focus on skills are among the major goals of the National Education Policy 2020, substantially increasing the number of youths with relevant skills,

including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship will also significantly contribute towards the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 2030.

With females being hit the hardest by the pandemic, the girl students especially in remote areas were facing challenges in terms of higher education and employment. The support of the upGrad Foundation in getting women learners to access the mainstream job market through digitization and upskilling will be a tremendous boost. The said initiative is initially being introduced in 16 colleges but can be expanded later on.

This is one of the many initiatives of the Higher Education Department to improve access to quality education, skills and knowledge to remote and distant areas and especially to girl children. The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Rohtak is already running an Entrepreneurial Internship programme focused on women learners for Jammu and Kashmir.

The department too is also promoting skilling initiatives on a large scale and has integrated skill education seamlessly with mainstream education. Add on skill courses will now be offered as 30 credit integrated courses in 12+ 18 format wherein 12 credits will be either embedded or as add on component while as 18 credits will be offered as Skill training by respective Sector Skill Councils under the certification of NSDC. Infrastructure in the HEIs has been created in a Skill development infrastructure in the Higher Educational Institutions of J&K has been created in a Hub and Spoke Model and 15 Hub and 75 Spoke centers stand already established with a seed money of Rs 10.00 Crore. The domains offered include Electronics, Computers & IT, Horticulture, Agriculture, Pharmacy, Paramedical, Food Science Technology, Fashion Technology, Epiculture, Sericulture, Veterinary Sciences, Financial Management, Engineering, etc.

The department is also planning to set up 15 centres for Innovation and Incubation to encourage start ups and help incubate promising ideas. It is also setting up Research and Innovation hubs in colleges and designating universities as mentor institutions to create an ecosystem of research and innovation.

Streaming of proposals worth Rs 51k cr reflects investment-friendly environment in J&K



Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir government receiving proposals worth over Rs 51000 cr for investment is a candid reflection of an alluring investment-friendly environment in the Union Territory after the launch of the New Central Sector scheme for industrial development here.

The J&K administration in January last year announced a new industrial developmental scheme with an outlay of Rs 28,400 crore to encourage new investment and take industrial development to the block level. The new policy, which will be applicable till 2037, also paved the way for bigger investors to invest in J&K.

“These potential proposals are estimated to generate 2.37 lakh employment,” the official said adding that the clearance process of these proposals has already been fast-tracked.

The new central sector scheme provides four types of incentives including Capital Investment Incentive, Capital Interest Subvention, Goods & Services Tax Linked Incentive and Working Capital Interest Subvention.

Moreover, in order to boost industrial development in UT, the government of J&K has also notified the J&K Industrial Policy, J&K Private Industrial Estate Development Policy and J&K Industrial Land Allotment Policy.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, has said: “Jammu & Kashmir, nestling in the lap of Himalayas, is on a mission to be the country’s fastest-growing region. Government’s prime objective is to extend trust with business conglomerate and strengthen existing regulatory policies to attract investments benefiting Citizens.”

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir had signed six agreements that will bring investments in the Union Territory’s real estate, infrastructure, tourism, healthcare and manpower employment sectors among others at Dubai Expo 2020. Several UAE based businesses signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with Jammu & Kashmir which included Al Maya Group, MATU Investments LLC, GL Employment Brokerage LLC, Century Financial, and Noon E-commerce. One Letter of Intent (LOI) was signed with Magna Waves Private Limited, Emaar Group and Lulu International.

Speaking at the Investors Summit in Dubai on January 6, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, said that Jammu and Kashmir has transitioned from a dormant commercial destination to a

region of opportunity and investment. In 2021, the Union Territory got \$2.5 billion (approximately Rs 18,568 crore) investments demonstrating the region’s vast opportunities and business potential.

For economic empowerment of Jammu and Kashmir, a 36-member business delegation from UAE visited Kashmir Valley to explore business opportunities. An official said around 70 thousand crore investment is expected to come from foreign investors.

The business community of Jammu and Kashmir welcomed the step saying it will be a start of a new era of economic development of Jammu and Kashmir.

Recently, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, during his visit to the UT remarked that Kashmir has become an “attraction for investors” both in India and internationally after the abrogation of Article 370.

“After the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, the way Kashmir has become an attraction for investors both in India and internationally was evident when a high-level delegation from UAE came to Jammu and Kashmir for investments,” Goyal stated.

“In fact, one of the MoUs was signed during my earlier visit also when I was there with LG Manoj Sinha in Kashmir. It seems that a whole host of investors had the benefit of visiting Jammu and Kashmir and experiencing the beauty glory and offerings of the Union Territory,” the Union Minister maintained.

He asserted that “rapid and enormous” progress will be there in Jammu and Kashmir in the years to come given huge thrust by the Government of India to promote investments in the Union Territory.

It is important to note that Titans of India’s Real Estate Sector, including promoters in Residential, Retail and Commercial space, Entertainment Industry, Tourism and Hospitality, Logistics and Warehousing and Financing Institutions came together for the growth of J&K at the first-ever ‘Real Estate Summit-2021.

In presence of Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha and Union MoS, Dr. Jitendra Singh 39 MoUs worth Rs 18,300 crore were signed to foster growth and development in Jammu and Kashmir. It included investments in the residential, commercial, infrastructure and film sectors.



Film Policy to boost economy, promote local talent in J&K

SRINAGAR: Much to the benefit of economy, Bollywood is again turning its eyes and cameras towards its once favourite shooting destination 'Kashmir' following the launch of Film Policy in Jammu and Kashmir.

Like the increase in footfall of tourists, film crews are also returning to Valley to capture the picturesque, shooting-friendly locales which will give a huge fillip to UT's economy besides giving new dimensions to Film tourism here.

The residents in the valley are excited over the return of Bollywood which in its heyday during the '70s and '80 saw several mega-hits like 'Kashmir Ki Kali', 'Kabhi Kabhi' being shot in the exotic locations of the valley.

"This will bring in enormous profits for the government and for us," said Ghulam Ahmad, a driver by profession while appreciating the government for launching its film policy envisaging creation of a vibrant film ecosystem for all stakeholders.

India is a country where people live and breathe Bollywood; shooting movies, advertisements, serials, series become a source of economy from Ponny walla to hotelier to artist of a place besides a powerful tool for tourism promotion as the locales used in big hits see a significant boost in tourist arrivals soon after the films' release.

"This is the reason J&K government is wooing large production houses to shoot their big projects and offering fiscal incentives to the film makers," an official said. "The Government has been making an earnest bid to woo back Bollywood's movie czars to the J&K."

Prior to militancy in Kashmir, Bollywood wove its celluloid dreams in the sylvan settings of Kashmir which was one of the most sought after destinations and filmmakers were saved from going abroad for lush expanses and snow covered mountains for their outdoor shoots.

The Jammu & Kashmir Film Development Council (JKFDC) has taken several initiatives to promote the UT as a leading destination for shooting and production of all feature and non-feature content films, digital content and television shows.

The list of deliverables for producer of incentivized films would include incorporation of logo of the Jammu & Kashmir Film Development Council, proof of which shall be enclosed along with the documents for subsidy.

According to the Film Policy, the Government of Jammu & Kashmir is identifying catalogue and developing promising potential shooting locations that have aesthetic and cinematic appeal.

"These locations will be developed in synergy with the Tourism Department and private investors. The Tourism department will,

on a regular basis, identify and develop the places having abundant backdrop of natural beauty, enriched cultural traditions and historical monuments in the UT for the purpose of outdoor shooting besides ensuring their wide publicity through short films, brochures and other publicity material. Special emphasis will be laid on motivating the private sector for setting up of hotels, motels, restaurants and camping facilities at these locales," it reads.

The Policy also lays thrust on harnessing the local talent in the field of movie-making in J&K and creation of employment opportunities for the youth in the field.

For this, a complete database of the available local talent in J&K is being prepared for hosting on the website enabling the film makers interested in shooting their film in the UT to utilize their services.

"Since every film production is the meeting place for creative artists in the field of dance, film fashion, acting, choreography and advertisement, it will open new avenues of employment for the youth of J&K. Besides, there is also a requirement of people adept in cinematic tools like camera, editing, sound recording, set designing, lighting etc," it reads.

Opening avenues for the youth, the framing of Jammu and Kashmir Film Policy has now made it very convenient for the region's talent to work in the film industry. While promoting the scenic beauty of the union territory (UT), the policy envisages providing a platform for the local talent to prove themselves on the national level.

The new film policy of Jammu and Kashmir has generated fresh hope among local artistes that the policy would generate employment opportunities for them and rejuvenate old connections with Bollywood when filmmakers would make a beeline to the beautiful locales of the valley. The framing of Film Policy reflects the commitment of the present administration in J&K to support filmmakers, provide work opportunities to local talent which relied completely on Doordarshan and Radio where most of the work for the artistes has stopped.

Meanwhile, the Srinagar city will witness first of its kind National Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir (NFFJK), a grand event to be organized by J&K Film Development Council (JKFDC) in association with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) in Srinagar from June 15 to 20th June 2022.

The idea behind this film festival is to highlight the film, music and creative ecosystem in J&K, along with natural and socio-cultural beauty that Jammu and Kashmir has been blessed with, to the world.

Indian filmmakers are invited to submit their original films – fiction, documentary or shorts and music videos – for the 1st National Film Festival of Jammu & Kashmir.



Key reforms brought UT's fiscal system at par with any progressive system across country

SRINAGAR: "Key reforms introduced by the Jammu and Kashmir government in its financial structure envisaging added transparency and accountability have brought UT's fiscal system at par with any other progressive arrangement across the country," reads a communique issued by DIPR-JK.

A departmental official, while elaborating on the subject, maintained that implementation of transformative reforms such as Budget Estimation and Allocation Monitoring System (BEAMS), online submission of bills through J&K PaySys, mandatory administrative approvals, technical sanctions and e-tendering, digital payments, GFR, GeM and related measures have greatly helped the financial systems in J&K to be at par with any other developing financial system in the country.

Publication of pictorial e-compendiums related to projects completed under Back to Village, District Capex, UT Capex and JKIDFC broadly reflects the government's commitment towards engaging with the citizens. This is the first time in the Union Territory of J&K that people are able to oversee works being executed in their areas on a real time basis. During 2020-21, more than 18,000 works were available on the EMPOWERMENT portal for the first time in J&K for public viewing thus bringing in real grass root empowerment.

The sincere initiative of the Finance Department to institutionalize prudence in financial management in J&K has truly transformed the Union Territory. The essence of reforms such as online processing of bills through PaySys, streamlining of GST, e-stamping, e-GRAS, e-auction of liquor licences for retail outlets, digital payments, implementation of GeM, path-breaking reforms in J&K Bank, publication of important manuals relating to Budget and Audit, Back to Village and My Town My Pride initiatives besides 100% physical verification of works which was a most vital program to ensure implementation of projects without cost and time overruns.

"Promoting good governance in financial management has been one of the core objectives of the government. The financial system in J&K is one of the most transparent systems anywhere and is among the key changes that have

taken roots in the Union Territory," the official asserted.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, during a meeting with the Finance Department highlighted major reforms taken up by the J&K government to bring greater transparency in the financial system making it more robust and result oriented.

Sinha said that unprecedented levels of transparency have been achieved through EMPOWERMENT (Enabling Monitoring and Public Overview of Works being Executed and Resources for Meaningful Transparency), which is a web portal that hosts all the works being executed in the UT and allows public oversight over all works under execution.

"Our government believes in the mantra of four Ps-Peace, Progress, Prosperity and People-first, for holistic development of Jammu and Kashmir making the UT Atmanirbhar in all respects," LG maintained.

Union Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, during her recent visit to J&K said the abrogation of Article 370 brought impetus in financial activities, transparency in administration and growth in UT's economy.

"In the past two years, work that has happened in J&K is absolutely stunning. The government procurement, recruitment, government spending of its resources, taxation or deployment of resources, whatever it be, are now available online 24X7 with all transparency," she asserted. So in terms of bringing transparency in governance, in terms of being transparent itself tells you that they are accountable for every one rupee which is deployed on ground," she added.

"This kind of approach to governance was absolutely unheard of in J&K and for that I would honestly thank the abrogation of (Article) 370. And quickly, please have a look at all of you. Within the last two years, after the abrogation, the entire administration is now visible for every citizen of J&K to see what's going on here. It cannot be a few families' oligopoly. Money of the people should go to the people and it should be in a transparent process. That is what has been achieved in J&K and I'm very happy to have learnt about it," Nirmala Sitharaman maintained.

JKRLM TRAINS 125 WOMEN AS 'DIGI-PAY SAKHI'

Srinagar: In an endeavor to promote door to door digital banking and financial services in remote areas of Jammu Kashmir, J&K Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM) has trained 125 women from Self Help Groups as DIGI-Pay Sakhis in 2000 villages under Mission 'One Gram Panchayat-One DIGI-Pay Sakhi'.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, led administration is taking several ground breaking steps to transform the lives of women of Jammu and Kashmir especially those living in rural areas by engaging them in gainful livelihood interventions.

Lieutenant Governor, during the launch of Mission 'One Gram Panchayat-One DIGI-Pay Sakhi' in the UT last year had distributed 80 Aadhaar Enabled Payment Systems (AEPs) among the DIGI-Pay Sakhis under JKRLM.

Lieutenant Governor said that DIGI-Pay Sakhi has introduced financial inclusion within the UT's Self Help Group (SHG) ecosystem creating much needed financial access points with greater transparency even in remotest of the areas.

Apart from depositing money, the village population can also avail the benefits of additional banking and financial services such as Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana, registration of Kisan Credit Card



etc, LG added.

Believing that Nari Shakti's social and economic independence is the bedrock of any nation's progress, the J&K administration has started a mass movement for socio-economic uplift of women across the UT. The three new initiatives of Digi-Pay, Krishi Sakhi and Pashu Sakhi besides several other programs of women empowerment such as Hausla, Tejaswini, UMEED, Rise Together will further supplement the efforts of J&K government in empowering women and making them a key partner in UT's development journey.

In a first of its kind, J&K government is working to set up Women Industrial Estate at Udhampur Industrial Estate to fur-

ther strengthen the Women Entrepreneurs Ecosystem in J&K.

With increasing female literacy rate, enhanced access to quality education, encouraging more and more women to become entrepreneurs and providing financial support for the uplift of women, Jammu and Kashmir is now leading in the world of women empowerment.

Meanwhile, Rural Livelihoods Mission, J&K has trained DIGI-Pay Sakhis in financial services training courses run by BSE in J&K. The DIGI-Pay Sakhis are also spreading awareness among rural women to avail maximum benefit of various central and UT sponsored schemes.

The Digi-Pay Sakhis are also playing a key role in giving wings to the dreams of rural women in becoming independent and progressive women, an official said.

JKRLM is not only training women associated with Self Help Groups in financial services but is giving them marketing support to sell their goods to the bigger consumer base online.

The SHG products are now available on e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Flipkart and Meesho and JKRLM is helping rural women to connect with global e-commerce platforms thus increasing the scale of their business.

J&K SSB registers highest ever recruitment in 2021-22

CS directs timely completion of all recruitments through a transparent and accountable process

Srinagar: The government today said that J&K Service Selection Board has recruited the highest number of candidates for various departmental posts in 2021-22.

It was disclosed during a meeting chaired by the Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta to take stock of recruitments being made through the J&K Public Service Commission, J&K Service Selection Board, J&K Police Recruitment Board and J&K Bank.

The Principal Secretary, General Administration Department and concerned officers participated in the meeting.

It was informed that among all recruiting agencies, the Jammu and Kashmir Service Selection Board has recruited the highest number of candidates for various departmental posts through a trans-

parent recruitment process. The figure for the financial year 2021-22 stands at 9,390.

Cumulatively, during 2021-22, a total of 11,434 recruitments were made including 9,390, 561, and 1,483 selections by J&K Service Selection Board, J&K Public Service Commission, and J&K Bank, respectively, an official spokesman said.

He said that it was further informed that the J&K SSB has registered the highest ever recruitment in 2021-22, since its inception by selecting 9,390 candidates. Previously, the J&K Service Selection Board recruited 8,580 and 8,115 candidates in 2009 and 2015, respectively. Pertinently, during 2019-20 and 2020-21, 3,687 and 1,447 recruitments were made by the Board.

The Chief Secretary impressed upon all recruiting agencies to ensure transparent and accountable recruitment process for selecting eligible candidates for various posts being referred by different departments, which has been the distinguishing feature of recent recruitments, providing equal opportunity to all and merit as sole criteria for selections. They were directed to complete the respective recruitment cycles in a time bound manner to optimally augment the human resource requirement of various government offices, said the spokesman.

GOVT APPROVES J&K ROAD CLASSIFICATION & ROAD GAZETTE-2022

Jammu, May 05: The Administrative Council (AC) which met here under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha, approved the adoption of Jammu and Kashmir Road Classification & Road Gazette- 2022, an official press release informed Thursday.

It said Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to the LG, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, J&K and Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the LG attended the meeting.

The Jammu and Kashmir Road Classification & Road Gazette-2022 will guide the effective management of road infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir through a systematic documentation of roads, the press release said.

It said the Road Gazette will serve as an inventory of all roads in the Union Territory besides serving the Department in prioritization of up-gradation works and planning future infrastructure. The Road Gazette will guide the department in achieving its endeavor to bring uniformity, transparency and accountability in the functioning of the department.

Earlier, the department has introduced J&K PWD Engineering Manual 2021 last year and more recently Bridge and Macadamization Manuals to provide standard guidelines for framing proposals, estimation, standardization of bidding documents and ensuring quality control in works, in accordance with the latest practices in the field.

It also approved the proposal of Public Works (R&B) Department to delegate the authority to provide technical sanctions to projects among various senior engineers posted in sister agencies of Public Works (R&B) Department on deputation basis, the press release informed.

Currently, the power to grant technical sanctions for various projects vests entirely with the officers and engineers posted in the Public Works (R&B) Department, which exponentially increases the work load in the Department and consequently leads to avoidable delays in project execution. Accord of Technical Sanction involves careful analysis of specifications, cost estimates as well as feasibility studies, the press release said.

It said with the delegation of powers to the engineers on deputation to other departments, each department will now be able to grant timely sanction to projects for their expeditious commencement and completion.

Pertinently, the GFR 2017 provides that no works are to be commenced or liability incurred without obtaining proper Administrative Approval and Technical Sanction by competent authority.

Govt promoting gender-inclusive ecosystem in J&K

Ensuring women enhanced access to education, economic growth

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government has embarked on numerous initiatives to create a gender-inclusive ecosystem in the Union Territory for ensuring women get enhanced access to education besides socio-economic growth.

The government led by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, is providing all opportunities to J&K women to progress and prosper in all fields of life ensuring their equal role in development pursuits. The administration is leaving no stone unturned to ensure social and economic equality for women in the UT which is integral to achieving rapid growth and development. Women empowerment and their equal presence in the technology sector are important to building a strong community, a resilient state and a stronger country.

For the first time, the government took a historic decision that the spouse of a Jammu and Kashmir domicile shall also be deemed as a domicile. Earlier, spouses of Permanent Resident Cardholders were considered at par but not domiciles.

In this regard, Jammu and Kashmir administration added a clause to J&K Grant of Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules, 2020, allowing the spouse of a native woman married outside the Union Territory to apply for a domicile certificate.

The order has also modified the application of domicile condition to all levels of jobs in Jammu and Kashmir government, as the newly added clause has been brought under the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralization and Recruitment) Act as well.

Lieutenant Governor recently during a meeting with members of Jammu and Kashmir's first women cycling club 'Women do Ride' said the government is making proactive intervention to create facilities to encourage women participation in governance, business and other sectors. He appreciated the role of women in society terming their complete empowerment as a game changer in the development world of the UT.

J&K government is taking necessary steps so that our girls are well equipped with knowledge, skills and self-confidence and included at all levels of governance.

The AICTE's scholarship program and UT government's initiatives like Hausla, Tejaswini, Umeed, LG Super 75, Parvaaz and Mumkin are some of the major steps taken up by the government towards women empowerment and bridging the gender gap.

The focus of J&K government is on effective implementation of policies and programmes tailored for women emancipation which is pre-requisite for progress and prosperity of the UT. Focus is being accorded on skill training and re-skilling of women so that they have equal share in future economic opportunities.

Collective efforts are yielding tangible results and it is important to notice that during Kashmir University's convocation, there were 94 gold medalists in 2021, of which, 77 per cent or 66 were girls. Similarly, during the convocation of Islamic University of Science and Technology, the majority of gold medalists were women which is a clear sign of women empowerment.

The J&K government has made headways in strengthening industry-academia partnerships and skill development of students at higher secondary level also.

J&K WITNESSES COMPLETION OF 65000 PROJECTS IN 3 YEARS

UT admin completes 1193 works languishing since past 10-20 years

SRINAGAR: Reflecting the exponential rise in completion of development works and establishing itself as a leader from a laggard in the world of progress and prosperity, Jammu and Kashmir has completed over 60,000 development projects in the past three years.

According to an official document, 66,724 development projects have been completed in the Union Territory from 2019 to January 2022.

The breakup details stated that 9229 projects have been completed during 2018-19, 12637 in 2019-20, 21943 during 2020-21 exhibiting a steep increase as compared to previous years' achievements while 22975 works have been completed during the financial year 2021-22, till January 2022.

The records added that the "financial reforms and interventions" initiated by the Centre have facilitated completion of such a long list of development projects within the set timelines in the Union Territory.

"Authorization of projects and resources allocation is made through Budget Estimation, Allocation and Monitoring System (BEAMS), which is a real-time and paperless system. Through these interventions, the Union Territory has witnessed an unprecedented rise in completion of development works and projects in three years," the document reads further.

Similarly, implementation of transformative reforms such as BEAMS which enables online budgetary process and timely release of funds against approved works, online submission of bills through

J&K PaySys, Mandatory Administrative Approvals, Technical Sanctions and e-Tendering, digital payments, GFR, GeM and related measures have paced up the development works and brought J&K at par with any other progressive state in the country.

Apart from prioritizing newly sanctioned works, the administration has also focused on languishing projects.

During a review meeting of the Jammu & Kashmir Infrastructure Development Finance Corporation (JKIDFC), it was revealed that a total of 2357 projects have been approved in HPCs for funding under JKIDFC for an amount of Rs. 7110.78 crore, of which, 1239 projects for an amount of Rs 1748.65 crore have been completed.

It was also informed by the officials of JKIDFC that till date disbursement amounting Rs 2270.08 crore with 4637 payments for 1923 projects has been made out of total 2500 crore loan lifted from different financial Institutions and Nationalized Banks.

JKIDFC has achieved tremendous transparency with the incorporation of an online payment tracking mechanism, tender details/allotment information and geo-tagging of all the projects approved for funding under the languishing scheme of JKIDFC that in itself is a unique model across the country, maintained an official spokesperson.

The J&K administration linked every project approved under JKIDFC with Google Earth for real-time monitoring which facilitated public viewing on the official website of JKIDFC. It was stated that these measures had been taken to ensure the quality and timely completion of all these infrastructural projects languishing in the UT for a long time, he added.

The official figures revealed that 1193 projects worth Rs 1984 crore have been completed including five projects which had been lying incomplete for more than the past 20 years, 15 projects for more than 15 years, and 165 projects for more than 10 years under the languishing projects programme.



J&K govt creates Rs 500 cr Film Development Fund for 5 years

TO ENSURE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF FILM POLICY AND MAKE AVAILABLE RELEVANT FACILITIES TO FILMMAKERS, A FILM PROMOTION AND FACILITATION COMMITTEE HEADED BY THE CONCERNING DISTRICT MAGISTRATE (DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS) HAS BEEN CONSTITUTED AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL.

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has created the Film Development Fund (FDF) in the Information Department for the fiscal year 2022-23, for the disbursement of subsidies envisaged in the J&K Film Policy 2021, reads a communique issued by DIPR-JK.

To effectively implement the ambitious J&K Film policy, the government last year allocated Rs 500 crore to be payable in the next five years for financially supporting the development of a vibrant film ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir. This policy is valid for 5 years from the date of notification.

According to the Film Policy, “starting from the fiscal year 2022-23, a separate head of account shall be created as Film Development Fund, in the Information Department and an annual budgetary allocation of Rs. 100 crore for the remaining term of the Film Policy shall be made by the Finance Department for disbursement of subsidies to the eligible beneficiaries/filmmakers who have applied for the same”.

Jammu and Kashmir Film Development Council (JKFDC) would be the single point of contact for supporting the development of a vibrant film ecosystem in the UT and will exclusively oversee the implementation of the Jammu & Kashmir Film Policy.

To ensure effective implementation of Film policy and make available relevant facilities to filmmakers, a Film Promotion and Facilitation Committee headed by the concerning District Magistrate (Deputy Commissioners) has been constituted at the district level.

The committee has the mandate to monitor shooting-related activities and ensure stay facility in the government guest house/ tourist lodge on a payment basis and issuance of a time-bound certificate from the office of the District Magistrate (Deputy Commissioner) in respect of shooting days after the shooting is over. It will ensure prompt disposal of the grievances directed at the district-level offices.

The committee takes necessary action by calling a meeting of the Film Promotion and Facilitation Committee within 7 days of



receiving directions from the JKFDCC regarding the application. Post-grant of permission by JKFDCC, a Nodal Administrative Officer will coordinate with the Committee to facilitate the shooting of the film till its completion.

In yet another significant move of the J&K government, Srinagar city is all set to witness a first of its kind National Film Festival of Jammu and Kashmir (NFFJK), a grand event to be organized by the J&K Film Development Council (JKFDCC) in association with the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) from June 15 to 20th June 2022.

The idea behind this film festival is to highlight the film, music and creative ecosystem of J&K along with its natural and socio-cultural magnificence to the world.

Notably, the J&K Film Policy clearly states that the Jammu & Kashmir Film Festival would be organized with an aim to encourage the production of films of Aesthetic and technical excellence and social relevance. “The Film Festival will also aim at encouraging the study and appreciation of cinema as an art form. The government of J&K intends to bring in a system of awarding films and filmmakers.”

Over 40+ awards will be given as part of the award ceremony during the festival including special awards for J&K regional films.

Mega Health Camp: 2500 successful surgeries conducted with zero complications

DIV COM ANNOUNCES 2ND FREE MEGA HEALTH CAMP IN SOUTH KASHMIR IN SEPTEMBER, REGISTRATION TO BEGIN FROM JUNE

Srinagar: The Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole Wednesday informed that over 2500 surgeries were conducted during the week-long Rotary Health Camp held across three districts of Baramulla, Kupwara and Ganderbal.

Addressing a presser here along with Governor Rotary Club of India, Dr Rajiv Pradhan; Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr Musjtaq Ahmad Rather; Nodal Officers DDRCK, the Div Com said the camp was aimed to complete the backlog of elective surgeries accrued during the Covid lockdown as these surgeries were deferred to reduce the pressure during pandemic period on health infrastructure and medical staff.

He informed that over 2500 surgeries were conducted during the Rotary Health Camp and added that although health camp concluded successfully, the camp shall continue to complete the surgeries of all the registered patients till June 02, 2022.

Sharing details about the dedicated operation theatres of the camp, Div Com said that about 14 theaters were continuously working from 8 am in the morning till 8 pm in evening during the week.

He said the Rotary surgeons will continue to visit the camp hospitals including District Hospitals of Kupwara, Ganderbal, Baramulla and Sub District Hospital Sopore to complete the pending surgical procedures of those patients who require it.

Dr Rajiv Pradhan thanked Div Com and Director Health Services and said that the health camp was successful due their extensive and continued support.

He informed media that renowned specialists from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and other places of the country rendered their service to help people of Kashmir.

Recalling the work done by Rotary in the past, he said that the organization visited African continent 46 times and conducted 1.5 lakh surgeries. He said Rotary is spread across 184 countries while it has two clubs in Srinagar.

“This mega health camp established a bond between local doctors and Rotary specialists who worked together to achieve the feat of success,” Dr Pradhan said.

“This mega health camp was attended by 43 renowned international surgeons and volunteers from Rotary Club who were supported by an additional human resource of around 450 persons in the form of surgeons, anaesthetics, paramedics and support staff deputed by Directorate of Health Services Kashmir and GMC Baramulla,” he said.

Div Com said that “these surgeries were a great success not only in numbers, but there were zero complications which is a proud moment for all of us.”

Pertinently, the week-long camp which started on May 11 and concluded today on May 18; it was inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Sopore Sub District Hospital on May 13.

It is worth mentioning here that all these surgeries were done free of cost under AB-PMJAY scheme (Golden Card) and no out of pocket expenditure was incurred by the beneficiaries.

KU gets first woman VC in Prof Nilofer Khan

Srinagar: Professor Nilofar Khan, has been appointed as the first woman Vice-Chancellor of the University of Kashmir, officials said on Thursday.

The order of appointment was issued by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha in his capacity of being the Chancellor of the university.

“In exercise of the powers vested in me under Section 12 of the Kashmir and Jammu Universities Act, 1969, I Manoj Sinha, Chancellor, University of Kashmir, hereby appoint Professor Nilofer Khan, Professor, Department of Home Sciences, University of Kashmir, as Vice Chancellor of the University of Kashmir for a period of three (03) years with effect from the date she takes over the charge,” a communication issued by the LG’s Secretariat said this afternoon. It said that the terms and conditions will be notified separately.

Khan, who is currently working as Professor in the Department of Home Science, is likely to take over as the Vice-Chancellor of the university on Saturday. She will be replacing Professor Talat Ahmad, who completed his sec-



ond tenure as VC of the university which began in August 2018.

Professor Khan, who had the distinction of being the first woman to be appointed as Dean Student Welfare at the univer-

sity few years ago, has been appointed as Vice-Chancellor for a three year term.

Besides having been Registrar, Professor Khan has also held the post of Dean College Development Council.



Vocational Education in J&K getting special attention

Srinagar: Realizing the significance of vocational training in furthering business preferences for students, the Jammu and Kashmir government is laying focused attention on promoting this vital sector at all levels.

The administration, as a sequel to bring about qualitative enhancement at all levels of education in the Union Territory, established State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT) by merging existing State Institutes of Education (SIE) and District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET).

The move was aimed at to mainstream teacher education and curriculum reforms besides providing academic research, extension and training support in the field of school education throughout the UT.

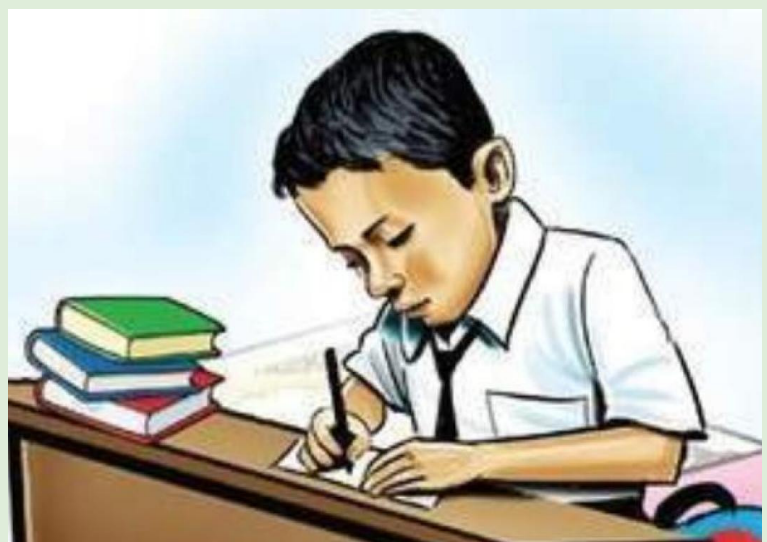
According to official details, Skill Hub Initiative has also been implemented in 40 schools for out of school youth under Vocational Education. Vocational Education is being imparted in 714 Secondary and Senior Secondary Schools in 14 different trades across the UT. Besides, with inauguration of 626 Vocational labs by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, the total number of this vital facility in J&K has reached to 850. The government is extending vocational education to 70000 students from 9th to 12th every year with most of them getting employment in their relevant fields.

As a part of National Education Policy (NEP), all the students of 6th to 8th have been mapped with vocational institutes to impart the basic skills of vocational education.

As part of NIPUN BHARAT MISSION, teaching learning material in the form of workbooks, worksheets and flash cards was provided to 522226 students of class I to V besides giving away resource material to 40318 primary teachers at a cost of Rs. 13.66 crore. Also, Rs. 4.03 crore were provided to DIETs to conduct training on FLN (Foundational Literacy and Numeracy) to make teachers abreast with new techniques of teaching.

Besides, 100 days reading campaign was conducted successfully in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir where more than 4 lakh students participated.

To take care of basic needs of schools ensuring that learning is not affected, Rs 45.94 crore were provided to



22250 schools as Composite School Grant varying from Rs 10000 to Rs 100000 per school, of which, Rs. 4.60 crore were spent on SWACHHTA activities in schools. Similarly, payment of Rs 47.29 crore was made through DBT into accounts of 788247 students of class I to VIII as cost of two stitched uniforms @ Rs 600 per student.

“Schools with high enrolment shall be developed as Smart Schools in the coming years, which shall be saturated with all the basic facilities,” official informed. He added that there shall be no Gap in the Infrastructure and Sports facilities and teachers shall be imparted special trainings to enhance their academic standards.

To channelize youth energy, hone their personality and prepare them for future challenges, youth clubs are being formed in every panchayat of the UT with at least 5 members.

Similarly, sports and physical education grants of Rs 19.67 crore were provided to schools through district officers for procurement of sports equipment for the schools @ Rs 5000 for Primary Schools, Rs 10000 for UPS, and Rs 25000 for HS and HSS in 2021-22.

Under Right to Education, free text books of Rs 19.30 crore were provided to 550000 students of class III to VIII through Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education.



NABARD

NABARD enhances commitment towards rural economy of J&K, Ladakh

**SANCTIONS RS
1542 CR UNDER
RIDF DURING 2021-
22 RECORDING
92.75% INCREASE
OVER LAST YEAR**

JAMMU: Aligning with its vision and mission “Development Bank of the Nation for fostering rural prosperity”, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has enhanced support to various sectors of rural economy for sustainable growth and development of Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh during 2021-22.

NABARD made a stellar performance in sanctioning projects for rural infrastructure development under RIDF. The sanctions during the financial year 2021-22 were Rs. 1542 crore representing an increase of 92.75% over the last year. This will spur the rural economy in the UTs and will catalyze other sectors to see expansion.

According to support the farmers in their agricultural production activities, Short Term Refinance to the tune of Rs.75.58 crore was extended to them during 2021-22. For boosting capital formation, Long Term Refinance of Rs.59.55 crore was also extended to the Regional Rural Banks.

Further, as part of Additional Emergency Working Capital for Farmers under Atma Nirbhar Package of Government of India, NABARD extended liquidity support of Rs 150.00 crore to JKGB. An interest subvention of Rs. 24.70 crore was also disbursed to RRBs and Cooperative banks

in the UT.

During the year, an amount of Rs 460.49 lakh was sanctioned and Rs 216.35 lakh were disbursed towards hosting of activities such as FLCs, demonstration vans, Micro ATMs, PoS and various types of capacity building projects under Financial Inclusion initiatives.

Besides, NABARD supported 18 Skill Development Programmes on different trades involving 525 candidates were supported during 2021-22. NABARD sanctioned an assistance of Rs. 825.78 lakh towards promotion of 21 FPOs under Central Sector Scheme (CSS) and 03 FPOs under Producer Organization Development Fund (Interest Differential) during the period. In order to strengthen the existing FPOs, several training programs and workshops were organized both at UT and district level.

Similarly, 7 projects have been sanctioned under NABARD’s Farm Sector Promotion Fund to support innovative technology, transfer projects like Indoor vertical expansion of Saffron, Promotion of Lavender Farming, Making of Decorative items from Sericulture waste etc.

In its commitment towards institutional development of RFIs under STCSS, recapitalization assistance to the tune of Rs.255.71 crore has been released by the UT government to three DCCBs (ACCB, BCCB and JCCB). NABARD has released the Center government’s share amounting Rs.111.22 crore.

During the year, NABARD contributed Rs 1892.73 crore under various components of Development Package for Jammu and Kashmir which inter alia included Infrastructure Development, Promotion of FPOs under Central Sector Scheme, Promotion of SHGs and JLGs, Support for GI registration, Refinance Support, Atmanirbhar Bharat Package, Credit for area expansion under Walnut, Saffron and Apple.

LG administration employing e-measures for transparent, responsive governance in J&K

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government, led by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, is taking comprehensive electronic measures for ensuring a transparent, accountable, and responsive governance system, reads a communique issued by DIPR-JK.

The UT administration has given the Information Technology Department the mandate of completing end to end digitization of all services, integrating all public services on a single platform besides developing a feedback mechanism for the same in the given time-frame.

More services were brought on the Rapid Assessment System (RAS) platform to continue top performance on NeSDA and become number one performing UT among all states and UTs of the country.

J&K has launched many e-governance initiatives to promote transparency, accountability and responsive working culture in departments. In this regard, Mobile Application 'Satark Nagrik' and Departmental Vigilance Officers (DVO) Portal of J&K Anti-Corruption Bureau have been launched by Lieutenant Governor which are combating corruption to a great extent.

The 'Satark Nagrik' application has been developed with the purpose to facilitate seamless flow of information about corruption and enable citizens to submit their grievances with ease and mobility. Any citizen having an android based device can download the application from the play store. A unique ID number will be allotted at the time of registration of grievance which later can be used to track the status of the grievance.

Similarly, the DVO portal has been designed to enable an online communication channel with the DVOs of various departments. In certain cases, the complaints are related to ongoing works, current recruitments and payments yet to be made against contracts etc. By referring these matters to DVOs, violations and shortcomings can immediately be rectified and loss to the state exchequer can be prevented. Other measures of this system included an Electronic Vigilance Clearance System for furnishing vigilance clearances through electronic or online mode for all the government employees.

Also, UMANG unified mobile application for new-age governance is a multi-lingual mobile platform for providing 'anytime-anywhere governance'. In sync with the vision of 'APPKA MOBLE HAMARA DAFTAR' the Government of J&K is committed to provide citizen-centric services through the mobile mode. This will

enhance the accessibility of services and add to the convenience of citizens while availing these services.

The services on the UMANG platform are end-to-end digitized and provide a one-stop solution to the citizens starting from application for a service and its processing to receipt of certificates/permissions. The services being provided have been integrated with an online payment gateway and Rapid Assessment System (RAS) of digital feedback.

Several popular services like birth certificates, death certificates, rehri licenses, marriage certificates, income certificates, character certificates, dependent certificates, SC/ST RBA certificate and related documents can be accessed by the public at <https://web.umang.gov.in> or by downloading the mobile app 'UMANG' which is available on 'Andriod' and 'IOS' platform.

With adoption of e-office, a simplified, responsive, effective and transparent paperless working culture across all the departments is being achieved. With the implementation of e-office initiative, the disposal rate of files has touched an all-time high of 96 percent. Besides, 305 Head of Departments are now on e-office and E-files are accessible to all officials irrespective of their locations.

J&K is first among UTs in e-office disposal of files. Currently, 180 services are online which have been linked with a feedback mechanism. All HoDs have been brought on e-office portal while the "Annual Performance Reports" of JK Administrative Services (JKAS) officers have been shifted to online mode on SPARROW Portal.

The ranking of UT of J&K has improved significantly and has achieved number one rank among all the UTs in the NeSDA-2021. The UT Portal has higher compliance to the assessment parameters like accessibility, 'Information Security and Privacy', 'Content Availability' and 'Ease of Use'.

Further, J&K Integrated Grievance Redressal and Monitoring System (JKIGRAMS) has been developed as an e-Governance initiative to provide a 24x7n platform to the citizens for redressal of their grievances. The JKIGRAMS Portal has been integrated with the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) of the Central Government.

Moreover, Under the 'Mulaqaat Programme', the citizens can interact directly with the Lieutenant Governor for seeking redressal of their grievances that have been filed on the JK grievance portal.

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E-Governance

J&K Bank crosses RS 500 CR mark in annual net- profit after seven years

Srinagar: Posting its highest annual profit after FY 2014-15, J&K Bank today registered annual net-profit of Rs 501.56 Cr for the Financial Year 2021-22 witnessing 16%YoY growth when compared to Rs 432.12 Cr recorded last financial year, while delivering net profit of Rs 112.20Cr for Q4 of the current financial year.

The bank declared its annual and Q4 results today after the Bank's Board of Directors approved the numbers in a meeting held here at the bank's Corporate Headquarters

Performance Highlight

While funding its liabilities including non-financial ones on voluntary basis by making one-time provisioning, J&K Bank today delivered net profit of Rs 501.56 Cr for the Financial Year 2021-22 and registered Rs 112.20 Cr net profit for January-March quarter of the FY 2021-22

During the fourth quarter, the Bank's other income rose 10% YoY to Rs 196.45 Cr while the total income increased by 7% to Rs 1171.95 Cr.

With Cost of Deposits improving from 4.10% to 3.65% on YoY basis, the Bank's NIM was recorded at 3.50% for the year ended March 2022. CD and CASA Ratios stood at 61.37% and 56.56% respectively for the reviewed financial year.

Asset-Quality

The Bank's gross and net NPA as percentages to gross and net advances improved considerably to 8.67% and 2.49% respectively when compared to 9.67% and 2.95 %, recorded last year.

The NPA Coverage Ratio of the Bank witnessed marked improvement to 84.26% when compared to 81.97% a year ago.

Capital-Cushion

After raising over Rs 1100 Cr as capital during the FY 2021-22, the Bank's Capital Adequacy Ratio witnessed marked improvement from 12.20% to 13.23% thus ensuring availability of growth capital in addition to maintaining the regulatory requirements.

Growing-Business

Posting growth of over 5% in its business, the Bank's deposits have increased by 6% to Rs 114710.38 Cr while Advances have grown to Rs 70400.68 Cr. In J&K, the deposits have witnessed a 7% increase while advances have grown by 10%.

MD-Speak

Commenting upon the annual financial results, Bank's MD & CEO Baldev Prakash said, "Well, numbers do tell their own story and the story is that after long we have surely strengthened and stabilized as a financial institution. We have left the worst far behind us as it's after seven long years, the Bank has consolidated its balance-sheet and clocked over Rs 500 Cr as annual profits. Our YoY and QoQ growth in business is consistent and provides the Bank requisite drive to grow and leap ahead with more strength and confidence."

"Preferring stability and consolidation of balance-sheet over profits, the Q4 numbers express our resolve to strengthen balance-sheet while making sustained profits, as we have provided for our liabilities besides making voluntary provisioning for some non-financial obligations that were not mandated and could be met over a period of next five years as per the board approvals. This has been done consciously to provide ourselves enough head-room for delivering better returns to our investors while going forward," he added.

Regarding the strategy for achieving the Bank's business goals, he said, "For achieving our growth objectives, a comprehensive strategy review has been completed. As the last leg of the reviewing process we organised a maiden but very fruitful Strategy Conclave in Srinagar last week that helped us to conclude the most enriching and exhaustive business strategy review of the Bank and delineate the future course of action by taking all concerned stakeholders on board."

He further said, "Although growth in J&K has generally been around 10% both for Deposits as well as advances even during the crisis situations but the green shoots of shift in stance in our Rest of India (ROI) business strategy have begun appearing with QoQ growth of 6% in our ROI loan book, which has happened after witnessing de-growth during last few consecutive years."

Summing up his future view of the Bank's position and performance, MD & CEO said, "With record tourist-inflow this year, Governmental emphasis on increased infrastructure spend and investment climate obtaining favorably in our core geography of J&K and Ladakh, we can see the promising scenario emerging for us as premier financial institution of the region that is expected to grow ahead and gain further significance in short as well as long-term."

Govt ensuring adequate, affordable medicare to people at doorsteps

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir government is working tirelessly to augment and expand healthcare network in the Union Territory so that the ailing populace is facilitated with best medicare at their doorsteps, reads a communique issued by DIPR-JK.

Abrogation of Article 370 from the erstwhile state further accelerated the growth and development scenario in J&K with complete implementation of several revolutionary policies and interventions in the Union Territory.

The J&K administration is focusing special attention on three areas 'Prevention, Better Treatment and Care' besides ensuring several incentives for poor patients of the UT. In his regard, seven new medical colleges, two AIIMS, nearly 1000 healthcare and wellness centres, five new nursing colleges have been established in J&K besides introducing BSc paramedical courses and increasing medical seats by almost more than 100 percent.

The focus of the government is not only on creation of best of the best private hospitals in Jammu and Srinagar but also on strengthening hospitals in districts and other remote areas.

The UT administration launched J&K Health Care Investment Policy (HCIP) to encourage private players to set up healthcare infrastructure in the Union Territory.

This Healthcare Investment Policy aims to materialize the UT government's commitment of providing quality healthcare to its citizens at their door steps. Besides, the document ensures availability of a complete gamut of healthcare services in primary, secondary and tertiary care centers to people of the UT.

Meanwhile, the new Unani Medical College and Hospital has been set up with a cost of Rs 32.50 crore at Ganderbal with financial assistance of Rs 17 crore from the Ministry of Ayush under Centrally Sponsored Scheme, Rs 18.25 crore from the J&K government and Rs 38.82 lakh under National AYUSH Mission to make the college operational. The college has an intake capacity of 60 students in BUMS course besides having a hospital of 60 bedded facilities.

Notably, AYUSH ministry has sanctioned several other projects in J&K under National AYUSH Mission and erstwhile centrally sponsored schemes including a Government Ayurvedic Medical College

at Akhnour, five 50 bedded integrated Ayush Hospitals in the districts of Kupwara, Kulgam, Kishtwar, Kathua and Samba besides upgrading existing infrastructure of 35 standalone Ayush dispensaries and promoting 571 Ayush dispensaries as health and wellness centres in a phased manner under the flagship programme of Ayushman Bharat by 2023-24.

Speaking on transformation taking place in the health sector of J&K, Lieutenant Governor 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 doorsteps," added the LG.

LG maintained that 'Our efforts of reforming the healthcare sector have been impressive. We have addressed the health infrastructure issues with a comprehensive and long term national vision under the guidance of the Prime Minister and even the far-flung areas now have adequate, affordable and reliable healthcare facilities.'

Jammu and Kashmir has one of the highest budget allocations in the country. 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 division. Besides, seven new Government Medical Colleges are being established with a total cost of Rs 1595 crore, ten new Nursing Colleges with an approximate cost of Rs. 60 crore and 5 nursing colleges have been upgraded. Similarly, two State Cancer institutes worth Rs 240 crore are coming up one each at Jammu and Kashmir division and 274 projects under CAPEX are being carried out to create unparalleled healthcare infrastructure.

Under the AB PMJAY SEHAT scheme in convergence with Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), nearly 55.56 lakh beneficiaries have already been registered. Besides, 1,592 medical packages, as approved under AB-PMJAY, are accessible to the beneficiaries of Jammu and Kashmir SEHAT scheme.

New hostels, model schools, special scholarship scheme for tribal students

Srinagar: Government has initiated the process for special projects to focus on tribal students' education which includes establishment of 20 new hostels, model residential schools and special scholarship scheme for students among other key sectors on the directions of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

The proposals were finalised in the UT Level committee meeting held today at Srinagar

Secretary, Tribal Affairs Deptt, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary chaired the meeting which was attended by Special Secretary, Mohammad Harun, Director Tribal Affairs, Mushir Ahmed Mirza, Secretary, Advisory Board, Mukhtar Ahmed, Jt Director Planning Shama un Ahmed, Deputy Director Dr Abdul Khair, Nodal Officers, Arshad Hussain and Mukhtar Ahmed among others.

The department approved establishment of 20 new hostels with an intake capacity of 3000 students to be started in the current financial year for which state land will be provided by respective district administration. The step is aimed at providing quality resi-


dential facilities to tribal students enrolled in colleges and other institutes of higher secondary education. The Government intends to establish 50 new hostels over next two years for tribal students.

The report of the committee constituted for devising a special scholarship scheme for students enrolled in seasonal centers was also reviewed. The new scheme offer incremental scholarship upto Rs 2400/- replacing the existing slab of Rs 450/- for boys and Rs 675/- for girl students. The new scheme will benefit more than 34000 students in 1200 seasonal educational Centers and will promote education among tribal students. Additional support related to uniform, schools bags, sports material and teaching material was also discussed.

Meanwhile, 10 new Eklavya Model Residential Schools have also been recommended while 6 EMRS are being made operational this month which include one each in Anantnag, Kulgam, Bandipora, Poonch and 2 in Rajouri. Pertinently District EMRS Committee, Anantnag has operationalise the boarding school while other districts are at final stage. Districts have also been asked to provide land for establishment of new EMRS.

Dr Shahid asked the officers for effective coordination with District Administration and sectoral departments to ensure timely start of new projects and implementation of ongoing educational projects including smart schools in a time-bound manner. He also called for active involvement of PRIs at the local level for inclusive planning and ensuring convergence.

The meeting deliberated upon various educational support initiatives to promote education at primary level in tribal areas and explained the facilities base to ensure best opportunities to tribal students.



Experts call NEP-2020 a ‘liberating’ document, hail NCF

More focus groups meet over finalising position papers, SCF

Srinagar: Continuing with the exercise of finalising the position papers prepared by the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT), three more State Focus Groups (SFGs) held a consultative meet at the State Council of Education Research and Training (SCERT) division office here at Bemina.

NCERT, tasked with the responsibility of framing the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), has formed several groups comprising experts from various fields to prepare position papers on some 25 themes/areas.

The NCF Committee has appointed chairpersons, member secretaries and members to prepare the position papers. Four NCFs have been laid out by the NEP 2020 on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), School Education (SE), Teacher Education (TE) and Adult Education (AE) have been laid out by the NEP 2020.

All states and UTs have been asked to prepare their State Curriculum Frameworks (SCFs) passing through the process of District Level Consultations (DLC), mobile app survey and development of position papers by the State Focus Groups in 25 areas/themes identified as per the NEP, 2020.

The groups on Philosophy of Education, Adult Education and Teacher Education are led by Dr Najmah Peerzada, Associate Professor, School of Education & Behavioural Sciences, University of Kashmir, Dr Ghulam Hassan Mir, Head, Directorate of Lifelong Learning, University of Kashmir and Dr Syed Zahoor Ahmad Geelani, Dean and Head, School of Education, Central University of Kashmir respectively.

NCERT has also sought the expertise of the former Director School Education Kashmir, Mohammad Rafi, whose know-how on the subject is well established.

SCERT has been nominated as a nodal agency to prepare the State Curriculum Framework (SCF) through a series of consultative meetings involving

educationists, teacher educators, resource persons, representatives from Social Welfare Department, parents and neo-literates.

Dr Nazneen, HOD, Education Research Survey and Analysis (ERSA), SCERT, Fayaz Ahmad, Academic Officer, SCERT and Arshad Hussain Zargar, Academic Officer, District Institute of Education Research and Training (DIET) are the member secretaries.

Rakhi Atari, Senior Academic Officer, SCERT, Jammu and Shewta Kohli, Academic Officer, SCERT, Jammu attended the meeting via Zoom.

“In all 70 questions—40 for School Education, 10 each for ECCE, Adult Education and Teacher Education—were prepared by the NCERT,” Academic Officer, G H Reshi, who has been appointed as Nodal Officer, SCF, informed.

Describing NEP-2020 as a ‘liberating’ document, Ex Director Rafi, said the main USP of the policy is its seamless movement across various disciplines. “Could you ever imagine a student studying mechanical engineering and ending up passing out as a graduate in Economics,” Rafi wondered. “This was, until some time ago, quite unthinkable.”

The kind of participation we are witnessing today, he said, is way wider than it had been on the previous occasion.

Pertinently, the NCERT had dispatched a team last month to interact with diverse stakeholders at a consultative meet on the SCF.

“The inclusion of local flavour in the curriculum would help cast aside rigidity and exclusivity,” Prof Anita Nuna, former head, Department of Curriculum Studies, NCERT, New Delhi, said. “The National Education Policy 2020 has been designed in a manner that it allows—through discussions and consultative meetings with the stakeholders—the inclusion of the local flavour, value systems, socio-economic backgrounds and the best practices of any state or UT before the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) is given a shape.”

A bottom-up procedure, she said, had been adopted for the first time to frame the national curriculum based on several novel concepts such as competency-based education, experiential learning, flexibility, creative and critical thinking.

Agri, Horti sectors witnessing rapid transformation in J&K



Srinagar: The economy of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is largely agriculture dependent and approximately 70 percent of the population is directly or indirectly engaged in agriculture and allied sectors.

Out of a multitude of crops grown in J&K, rice is a staple crop, both in Kashmir and Jammu divisions, sown in summer (May) and harvested in late September. In addition to rice, corn, millets, pulses, vegetables like peas, beans, lentils etc. are also grown during the summer season. Wheat is another staple crop and along with barley is planted in winter and harvested in spring season

Among all States/UTs, Jammu and Kashmir has been ranked 3rd in monthly income to Agriculture households and 5th best performing State /UT in the Agriculture & Allied sector.

More than a million beneficiaries from J&K received direct financial support of Rs. 1983.29 crores during the last three years under the PM-Kisan scheme. 12 lakh farmers have been issued Kisan Credit Cards (KCC). Out of this 9.46 lakh KCC are live/operative in UT of J&K.

Mohammad Ashraf, a farmer from Pulwama is elated to share his success story of High Density Apple Plantation. “My family has been involved in the business of apple cultivation for the past more than 50 years and the income realization from per kanal of land was dwindling for the past one decade primarily due to lowering productivity of aged apple trees,” he said. He adds that while my family was upset over the declining yield and falling incomes, we came to know about the High Density Apple Plantation Scheme by the J&K government. “About 3 years back, I experimented with around 7 Kanals of land under the new High-density Apple plantation with support from the Horticulture department and it produced more than 15Kg of fruit per plant, which was a substantial rise as compared to the earlier scenario,” he says.

Ashraf has now planted 1000 more high-density plants in another 7 Kanals about a year ago and encourages others too to take benefit of the scheme. “Apart from higher income per Kanal of land, I am able to provide gainful employment to 5-7 families as well,” he said.

Under the National Saffron Mission, irrigation infrastructure with a sprinkler system connected to 126 deep Bore wells has been created. An area of 2598.75 Ha of land stands rejuvenated as on date. The implementation of National Mission on Saffron has ensured substantial increase in the crop yields from 1.88 kg per hectare to 4.50 kg per hectare which has ultimately doubled the income of Saffron Growers.

The J&K Government has successfully got the G.I tagging for Saffron and Basmati for effective domestic and international marketing. The registration for G.I tagging for Guchhi (Morchella), Solai Honey, Rajmash (Red Beans) and Muskhbudji is also in the pipeline. It will promote the economic prosperity of the farmers by enhancing their demand in National and International Markets.

The J&K government has also established two J&K Seed and Organic Certification agencies, one each in the Jammu and Kashmir Division. More so, the government also facilitated the opening of Offices of APEDA and LULU Groups in Kashmir Division and

APEDA in Jammu Division.

In J&K, Oil seeds have been sown over 1.10 lakh Ha of land. Kashmiri Lal Mirch is being harvested on 1182 Ha, Sweet Corn harvested on 165 Ha, while other exotic vegetables have been harvested over 150 Ha and farmers are getting massive returns out of them.

Similarly, sericulture (cultivation of silk) is widespread across the region. As per the Sericulture Policy 2020 of J&K, the mulberry silk production in the UT accounts only for 0.66% of the total mulberry silk production of India. Silk is an elite product in itself and the government is rapidly addressing the issues of the people involved in the sericulture sector.

Mechanization of farming is an essential step to transform the agriculture sector which will help farmers to produce more. As a part of agricultural mechanization support to the farmers for broader economic transformation, the Lieutenant Governor handed over sanction letters for 100 tractors to the farmers and 1035 threshers for local panchayats.

The government is also setting up Custom Hiring centres and Farm Machinery Banks in different parts of the union territory. As many as 207 Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) and 163 Farm Machinery Banks (FMBs) have been started so far. To raise awareness among the farmers about the use of technological equipment in agriculture, one paddy thresher is being given to all 4290 panchayats free of cost in UT of J&K. Out of 4290 panchayats, 3362 threshers have been distributed to the panchayats till date.

Achieving an incredible milestone, for the first time, more than 2000 trucks of vegetables have been exported from Jammu and Kashmir to different parts of the country. With a yield of 70 quintals for hectares of paddy, J&K has accomplished top position in the entire country.

Baldev Raj, an aspirational farmer from Vijaypur of Samba district has experienced a steep rise in income by cultivating exotic dragon-fruit in 24 kanals of land. “With an initial establishment cost of around 0.80 lac per Kanal (16 Lacs/Hectare), I am now earning around 1.0 lac/kanal (20 lacs/Hectare) annually,” he said. Baldev is all praise for the UT administration and Horticulture department in particular for the technical assistance he received from the department.

Another aspiring farmer Mohammad Akbar Dar, who is also the President of Budgam based Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) shares the success story of his FPO. Thanking UT administration and NAFED for all the technical support, he explains how his FPO is providing marketing support to the members which has helped them gain 3 times the price realization than earlier. “Now, we have gained access to markets throughout the country and abroad as well which has resulted in better prices for our produce,” he said. He adds that their FPO is now starting a new Walnut processing unit which shall help in substantial employment generation along-with value-addition to the walnut produce.

J&K, is thus witnessing a rapid transformation in the agriculture and horticulture sectors with increasing prosperity for the farmers as their incomes are rising and they are experiencing prosperity along-with becoming job providers rather than job seekers.

AC defines developmental contour for all departments, approves deliverables for the financial year 2022-23

Tangible targets fixed for all departments to be achieved on monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and yearly basis

Srinagar: The Administrative Council (AC) which met here under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, today approved an exhaustive list of developmental deliverables to be achieved in the financial year 2022-23, for all departments.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, J&K and Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor attended the meeting, an official communiqué issued after the meeting said.

It said that the decision to assign deliverables to all departments is a first-of-its-kind and innovative initiative of the Government aimed at propelling growth and development in the Union territory by prioritizing transformative action in all areas.

These deliverables broadly define the priority areas towards ensuring greater efficiency in the overall governance of Jammu and Kashmir, and lay down monthly, quarterly, half-yearly and yearly

targets for all departments, said the communiqué.

“These developmental contours not only define the quality and quantity of departmental services to be ensured in a time-bound manner, but also envision enhanced efficiency and productivity through greater inter-departmental convergence and coordination. Their implementation will be reviewed at the highest-level,” the communiqué said.

It said that the exercise of framing the detailed departmental deliverables and fixing tangible and time-bound targets; has been undertaken in consultation with concerned departments. The list of deliverables broadly includes approximately 1250 tangible targets relevant for improving public service delivery.

It is a transformative step to achieve the Government’s objective of good governance through holistic and transparent development of Jammu and Kashmir, said the communiqué.

Accountable, transparent system for recruitments established in J&K

‘Yogyata Se Rozgaar’ celebrates spirit of ‘merit’ in public employment

Srinagar: The Government of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has established an accountable and transparent system for the recruitment of various posts in different departments.

Article 16 of the Constitution of India lays down that, “There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of employment under the State”. It enshrines the principle of fairness and equality in public employment. However, the allegations of nepotism and patronage present a serious challenge to this hallowed provision of our constitution.

In keeping with the spirit of the Constitution, the UT of J&K has embarked on a journey of ensuring transparency and accountability while appointing candidates to various public posts. Apart from record number of posts being advertised by JKSSB, JKPSC and other recruiting agencies, the prime focus has been on ensuring that meritorious candidates are selected without any undue favour.

The interview stage has been done away with for non-gazetted posts as a measure of reform. More than 20000 posts were advertised in the current year and 10831 selections have been made till now. The remaining posts are under process for fast-track recruitment and will be completed soon. The recent appointment of candidates to around 8500 Class-IV posts is a welcome sign of the reforms carried out by the UT of



J&K.

Apart from these posts, the recruitment process for filling up 1850 posts (350 Probationary Officers & 1500 Banking Associates) was completed in a highly transparent manner by engaging IBPS to conduct the examination followed by an interview conducted by the experts. Gone are the days of favouritism and nepotism while making appointments to these posts.

Owais Bashir resident of Dalwan village in Pakherpora, Budgam is among the successful candidates who have been selected as part of the mega recruitment drive in J&K post abrogation of Article 370

Yogyata Se Rozgaar, initiated by J&K government, celebrates the spirit of “Merit” in public employment. To mark the successful conduct of examinations for these posts and the appointment based on merit,

Yogyata Se Rozgaar was celebrated at Panchayat Level and Block Level across the UT of J&K.

As a tool to enable women to actively participate in the recruitment process and their empowerment, the J&K administration took the historic decision of providing 15 percent reservation to women in non-gazetted posts in the police department. This monumental step is expected to invigorate the potential of youth especially women in the progress of UT.

Yogyata Se Rozgaar is not just a one-time event to felicitate new entrants to public service. It epitomizes that by ensuring accountability in appointment to public posts, the UT of J&K will keep intact the constitutional dictum of equality in matters of public employment.



J&K emerging as new top most investment destination

'Several policy interventions transitioning UT into industrially advanced region'

Srinagar: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday said that the Union Territory is emerging as the top most new investment destination across the country both for National as well as International investors.

The motto of Jammu and Kashmir Industrial Policy 2021-30, "Jammu and Kashmir- Tradition, Growth and Transformation", epitomizes the transition that J&K is undergoing. It symbolizes the thrust given to turn J&K into a lucrative investment destination, keeping in view the unique socio-economic and environmental underpinnings of this Himalayan region.

The industrial landscape in the UT of J&K is dominated by MS-MEs as it contributes about 8% to the GSDP and employs the largest number of people in services and manufacturing sectors. Around 25000 MSMEs that are operational in the UT provide employment to around 90% of the industrial workforce in the UT.

In this backdrop, the Jammu and Industrial Policy 2021-30 is a welcome change over the previous industrial policies of 1998, 2004 and 2016. With an outlay of 28,400 crores, 'New Central Scheme for Industrial Development of Jammu and Kashmir' notified by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Government of India (GOI), in 2021, is expected to provide impetus to J&K's transition into an industrially advanced region

J&K Private Industrial Estate Development Policy, 2021-30 has also been notified recently. Progressive reforms like GST linked incentive, Capital Interest subvention and Working Capital Interest Incentive have also been implemented. These policy interventions have started bearing fruits as investment proposals more than worth 50,000 crores have been received. These investments are expected to generate employment potential of 2.33 lakhs.

To further improve the industrial ecosystem in the UT of J&K, Single Window Approach has been streamlined with a view to improve Ease of Doing Business. Aimed at Minimising Regulatory Compliance Burden (MRCB), 130 services of J&K departments have

been made online.

With fast-paced urbanisation witnessed in J&K over the past few decades, there has been a spurt in the demand for housing and commercial units. The regressive limitations before the repealing of Article 370 posed several impediments in the full development of the real estate sector in J&K. To resolve this predicament, the first ever J&K Real Estate Summit 2021 was held in which 250 top developers from across the country participated.

Moreover, GOI's Model Tenancy Act has been adopted by the Government of J&K and portals for Real Estate Regulatory Authority and auction of the assets, allotment of dwelling units/plots of the J&K Housing Board, Jammu Development Authority, Srinagar Development Authority have been launched. In addition, a MoU has been signed between the Government of J&K and National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) for skilling 10,000 persons per year in seven trades in real estate under NULM (National Urban Livelihoods Mission) in Jammu & Kashmir.

The policy changes introduced in J&K were showcased to potential investors at the world stage during the visit of Lieutenant Governor of J&K to Dubai Expo- 2020. The Lieutenant Governor also inaugurated Jammu and Kashmir Promotion Week at the Lu- Lu Hypermarket, Dubai in which goods like GI tagged Saffron, famous varieties of apples, Kashmiri art and crafts, among others were showcased. A MoU with the Government of Dubai and other Global investors was also signed during this visit.

The road to industrial empowerment and comprehensive progress across several indicators in J&K is expected to present many challenges. However, with the overhaul of laws and rules, institutional support and competitive ecosystem being developed in J&K, it is expected that the bottlenecks will be resolved. J&K, in stark contrast with the economic isolation of the past, is very well poised to emerge as a regional and national investment cluster.

Extension of central laws after abrogation of Art 370 established equitable society across J&K



The Jammu and Kashmir government, in a big relief to the socially and educationally backward classes, has also enhanced the income ceiling from Rs 4.50 lakh to Rs 8 lakh for them to avail of benefits of reservation as per provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004.

Srinagar: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday said that with the extension of 890 Central laws applicable to Jammu and Kashmir, repeal of 205 state laws and modification of 129 laws after the abrogation of Article 370, “a system of equitable justice has been established in J&K for all sections of people”.

“The rights of weaker sections like Scheduled Tribes, other traditional forest dwellers, Scheduled Castes and Safai Karamcharis are now ensured by the application of relevant Acts. Rights of children and senior citizens are now being ensured,” reads a communique issued by DIPR-JK.

“In order to create a just and equitable society, reservation rules have been amended to extend benefits of reservation to left out categories like Pahari speaking people and economically weaker sections,” it reads.

Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman while tabling 2021-22 budget for J&K said, “OBC reservation benefits have been increased from 2 per cent to 4 per cent and income ceiling has been raised from Rs 4.50 lakh to Rs 8 lakh.”

“Sections of society which have been discriminated against since ages such as displaced persons of PoJK and Chhamb, West Pakistani refugees and residents of border areas have been benefited under various schemes. Special attention is being paid to Kashmiri migrants,” she said.

For the first time the spouse of a J&K domicile shall also be deemed as a domicile. Earlier, spouses of Permanent Resident Card holders were considered at par but were not considered domiciles. Children of central government officials posted for over ten years in Jammu and Kashmir will also continue to be considered domiciles.

The implementation of several path breaking central legislations after the re-

vocation of Article 370, like the 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 bringing a new era of progress and development in J&K.

The Forest Rights Act 2006 was implemented in J&K after 14 years of its existence in other states of India. On the special attention of the UT Government, Community claims’ and ‘individual claims’ are being settled by administration of respective districts.

Education for Tribals

“After a wait of more than 14 years, due rights have been conferred upon the tribal community by implementing the Forest Rights Act, 2006, keeping in mind the basic spirit of social equality and harmony as guided by the Constitution of our country and Parliament,” J&K Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said.

The Lieutenant Governor, who is taking a personal interest in tribal development recently launched the ‘Smart Schools’ Project in Jammu and Kashmir for tribal communities. Under this maiden project, modernization of 200 schools in Tribal areas will be completed in 2022.

He also said that the poor and weaker sections of society were neglected for many years in J&K but on the historic day of 5 August 2019, Article 370 and Article 31A were abolished and the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir were given all the Constitutional rights.

“In J&K we have charted a new development path after August 2019. For decades, infrastructure was in tatters despite the huge amount of money sent by the centre. The non-development agenda of seven decades in J&K mired the UT in a

low growth syndrome. Under the guidance of Prime Minister J&K is witnessing a new dawn. Tribals are getting land rights, 11,000 government jobs have been provided within record time with complete transparency and major steps have been taken to ensure the empowerment of women, marginalized and weaker groups,” Lt Governor said.

Following rationalisation of the percentage of reservation of different categories in direct recruitment, the residents of backward areas will now have 10 per cent reservation, Pahari speaking people (4 per cent) and Economically weaker sections (10 per cent).

The Jammu and Kashmir government, in a big relief to the socially and educationally backward classes, has also enhanced the income ceiling from Rs 4.50 lakh to Rs 8 lakh for them to avail of benefits of reservation as per provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act, 2004.

As per provisions of the Act, reservation in employment and admissions in professional institutions, among others is provided to the persons belonging to Socially and Educationally Backward Classes categorised as Weak and Underprivileged Classes (Social Castes), Residents of Areas adjoining Actual Line of Control and Residents of Backward Areas. However, there is an income bar/ceiling for availing this reservation.

The objective of prescribing the income ceiling in the Act is to prevent such persons, as have crossed or shall cross the threshold level of backwardness commonly known as ‘Creamy Layer’ from availing benefits of reservation under the categories of Socially and Educationally Backward Classes.

Mission Youth transforming youth of J&K into ambassadors of innovation, peace and dev

Srinagar: Mission Youth is a holistic program to bring the interests and empowerment of youth to the centre of policy making.

Mission Youth has been established as a specialized agency by J&K Government aimed to simultaneously achieve the twin goals of harnessing the rich demographic dividend and transforming youth of J&K into ambassadors of innovation, peace and development through various interventions for Youth Engagement and Outreach.

All the interventions rolled out under Mission Youth are specially customized for the youth, conceived on modern, novel lines and implemented through innovative techniques so that these interventions are able to strike a chord with the youth. Mission Youth, thus, has been perceived by the youth as a beneficial initiative with which they are enthusiastically engaging.

Under Mission Youth, the Government has launched a Youth data Portal for creating a database of youth so as to map their support requirements as per their needs and aspirations. 10 District Youth Centres have been approved for youth engagement at district level. Furthermore, Super 75 scholarship scheme for both girls and boys has been initiated under which a scholarship to the tune of one lakh is being provided to meritorious students from BPL background. A provision for assistance of youth in reputed coaching institutes for upsc and state psc exams under the aegis of Parvaaz Scheme has also been established under Mission Youth.

The most important scheme under the Mission Youth is Mumkin through which small commercial vehicles are provided to beneficiaries, with banking partners extending loan facilities up to 100% of the vehicle's on-road price.

Sahil, a young man, says that he has received a vehicle through the Mumkin Scheme. "I am thankful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for launching schemes for the benefit of youth. Everyone can't get a Government job. Youth should also look for opportunities in business. Youth upto age of 35 can avail the benefit of Mumkin Scheme," Sahil said.

The manager of Shuhul Mahindra Nowgam, Car showroom Syed Nazik Andrabi says that they have delivered many vehicles to the beneficiaries of Mumkin Scheme. "It has helped unemployed

youth to earn their livelihood. We give them a 10% rebate, 10% subsidy is given by the Government and the rest of the amount is financed by JK Bank. They don't have to pay anything on their own," he said.

TEJASWINI Scheme of Mission Youth aims to promote entrepreneurship among young women. The scheme envisages giving financial assistance upto Rs 5 lakhs to young women for setting up gainful self-employment ventures, suited to their skills, training, aptitude and local conditions. In the present financial year assistance to more than 2000 women entrepreneurs has been approved under the scheme.

More so, one thousand innovative projects of youth have been approved for assistance under Spurring Entrepreneurship Initiative of Mission Youth for giving a platform to individuals with promising ideas and the aspiration to grow to give tangible shape to their potentially high growth business ideas.

Mission Youth under its AVSAR (Connect to Opportunities Initiative) has signed a MOU Vision India for providing job opportunities to the youth of J&K. A dedicated portal of job opportunities for youth and J&K has been provisioned to facilitate them in getting the best job opportunities. The placement service window has been extended to all youth on a complimentary basis and with preferential benefits.

Mission Youth is also working on creating a database of all unemployed youth along with their bio-data so as to help them in finding decent jobs under this program as per their skill set and core capabilities. To sum up it would be apt to say that Mission Youth has transformed the youth development scenario in J&K in a remarkable manner.

Different programmes are formulated under Mission Youth with the objective to positively engage youth of J&K through multi-pronged strategy involving all necessary systematic interventions. The organization envisions inducing a sieve of demand driven interventions for inclusive development of youth which includes provision of livelihood generation, skill development, education, counselling & rehabilitation, sports and recreation among others.

Agriculture production dept restructured

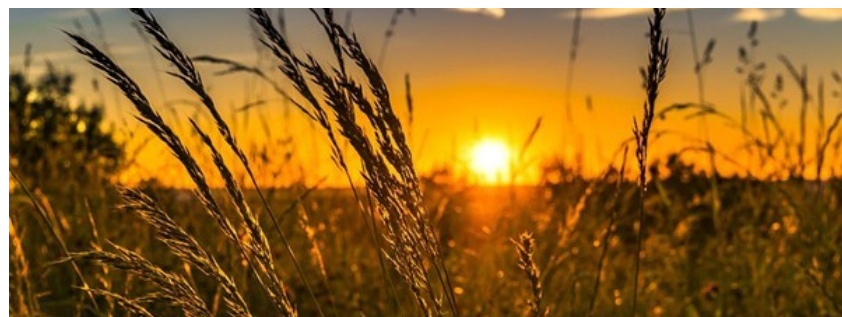
Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Saturday restructured the agriculture production department with the aim of doubling income of farmers, orchardists and people dependent on animal, sheep husbandry and fisheries for their livelihood.

Around 70 per cent of population is dependent on these sectors and creation of a fully-fledged Agriculture Production Department by merging three existing line departments – Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare, Animal, Sheep Husbandry and Fisheries and Horticulture – is likely to synergize efforts of the government in achieving the target of doubling farm income, an official spokesman said.

He said the restructuring would ensure that all schemes for welfare of the population engaged in these sectors are available under one umbrella in a single department.

"The benefits of various schemes available in these sectors can be converged and made available to farmers, orchardists and others as a comprehensive package," the spokesman said.

He said the decision would also ensure that the inter-sectoral requirements of agriculture and allied sectors are met in a hassle free



manner and will act as a milestone in transparent and timely transfer of funds to the farmers.

"This shall also be a step forward to achieve the objective of the Government to secure a comprehensive transformation in the livelihood of farmers in Jammu and Kashmir by modernizing technological interventions and diversifying support systems available in the agriculture and allied sectors," the spokesman said.

He said the decision is also likely to promote agri-entrepreneurship as a means of high return and respectable employment in a big way.

Govt approves J&K Road Classification & Road Gazette-2022

Jammu, May 05: The Administrative Council (AC) which met here under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha, approved the adoption of Jammu and Kashmir Road Classification & Road Gazette- 2022, an official press release informed Thursday.

It said Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to the LG, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, J&K and Nitishwar Kumar, Principal Secretary to the LG attended the meeting.

The Jammu and Kashmir Road Classification & Road Gazette-2022 will guide the effective management of road infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir through a systematic documentation of roads, the press release said.

It said the Road Gazette will serve as an inventory of all roads in the Union Territory besides serving the Department in prioritization of up-gradation works and planning future infrastructure. The Road Gazette will guide the department in achieving its endeavor to bring uniformity, transparency and accountability in the functioning of the department.

Earlier, the department has introduced J&K PWD Engineering Manual 2021 last year and more recently Bridge and Macadamization Manuals to provide standard guidelines for framing proposals, estimation, standardization of bidding documents and ensuring quality

control in works, in accordance with the latest practices in the field.

It also approved the proposal of Public Works (R&B) Department to delegate the authority to provide technical sanctions to projects among various senior engineers posted in sister agencies of Public Works (R&B) Department on deputation basis, the press release informed.

Currently, the power to grant technical sanctions for various projects vests entirely with the officers and engineers posted in the Public Works (R&B) Department, which exponentially increases the work load in the Department and consequently leads to avoidable delays in project execution. Accord of Technical Sanction involves careful analysis of specifications, cost estimates as well as feasibility studies, the press release said.

It said with the delegation of powers to the engineers on deputation to other departments, each department will now be able to grant timely sanction to projects for their expeditious commencement and completion.

Pertinently, the GFR 2017 provides that no works are to be commenced or liability incurred without obtaining proper Administrative Approval and Technical Sanction by competent authority.



J&K EMERGING AS TOP MOST TOURIST DESTINATION ACROSS INDIA

'Record breaking tourist arrivals seen in last few months'



Srinagar: The record breaking arrival of tourists in Jammu and Kashmir is reflection of successful packaging of uniqueness of tourism destinations in perfect manner.

The significant increase in tourist arrival in the picturesque famous destination of the country is possible due to the highlighting of diverse range of attractions – a concept launched by the tourism department under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

The administration is also focusing on exploring the full potential of pilgrimage tourism by developing various religious tourist circuits across the union territory besides the J&K Tourist Village Network initiative to transform 75 villages in Jammu and Kashmir known for historical, scenic beauty, and cultural significance.

The initiatives not only are aimed to empower youth and women through direct and indirect employment opportunities but the youth-led sustainable tourism initiative aims to strengthen the sparsely populated economy and public entrepreneurship.

According to an official, these 75 offbeat locations will provide adventure seekers, trekkers, and international visitors with an experience of nature's wilderness while also creating a livelihood in the villages in the forest environment through home-stays, nature guides, trek operators, food stalls, and forest souvenirs.

Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha recently 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 numbers of people are visiting Kashmir.

This is a golden period on the tourism front in the history of Kashmir and we should cash in on this period," the Lieutenant Governor said. "In the past few months, 80 lakh tourists have visited Kashmir, which is a record number even if compared to the 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," he added.

The Union government is enhancing the efforts of the J&K department of tourism with necessary resources and assistance. Liberal funding of a record budget allocation of Rs 786 crores which is Rs. 509 crores more than the previous budgetary allocation, speaks volumes about the Union government's eagerness to improve tourist industry infrastructure and related services in Jammu and Kashmir.

The UT administration has also taken several steps to ensure that air traffic to the Jammu and Srinagar airports grows unhindered in the future so that trade and tourism flourishes in J&K.

Pertinently, the Ministry of Civil Aviation approved five Srinagar-Sharjah flights per week on a regular basis, officials said.

Similarly, more than 5,85,653 tourists have visited the Kashmir Valley between January and April 27, which is five times more than last year's figures of 1.26 lakh during the same period. The Jammu airport recently achieved a milestone by recording the highest ever footfall of 1.54 lakh passengers in March on 1,346 flights.



One Beat Guard One Village' prog to create green spaces in 1500 villages in 2022-23

The initiative will also cater to needs of people like small timber, fuelwood, grazing from non-forest land

Srinagar: Under 'One Beat Guard One Village' programme, J&K Government will take 1500 villages 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.

'One Beat Guard One Village' 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. The programme also takes 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 which shall cover one revenue village in achieving objectives of greening that area and operations shall be carried out with the collaboration and coordination of respective Village Panchayats/BMCs etc, who will monitor the same for next 3 to 5 years.

In a recent review meeting of the Forest Department, the Lt Governor appreciated the new initiative of 'One Beat Guard-One Village'. He said that the initiative will go a long way in increasing the green cover and support the Jal Shakti Abhiyan on 'Catch the Rain: Where it Falls, When it Falls'.

On the development of Urban Green Spaces by the Forest Department, the Lt Governor said that the initiative involving stakeholders like Urban Local Bodies, other line Departments, Educational Institutions, NGOs and civil society will contribute significantly towards reducing air and noise pollution in urban areas.

Under this initiative, the Govt is working on a well-planned green future for J&K with low-cost greening methods for the greening of non-forest areas. The raising of trees and grasses is facilitated on the community lands by the local communities for their benefit.

The initiative can also meet the needs of the people for small

timber, fuelwood and grasses from non-forest lands besides reducing the pressure on the Forests on account of grazing by increasing the production of the grass & fodder outside the forest area.

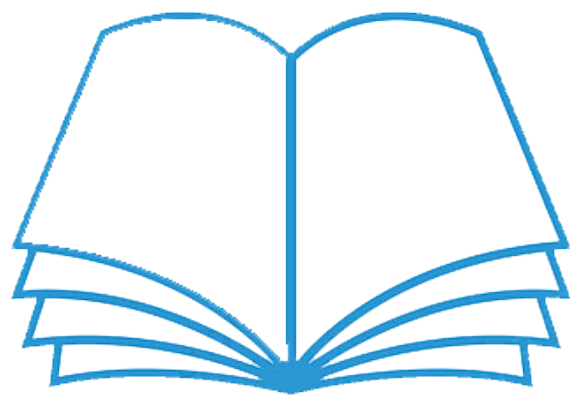
The initiative also aims to promote Agroforestry- land use management system in which trees or shrubs are grown around or among crops or pastureland.

Any Nation's strength predominantly rests in its natural resources. India ranks among the top twelve mega-diverse countries in the world. Jammu and Kashmir harbour huge diversity in vegetation due to its geographic and altitudinal variation. It also has the highest diversity of herbs in the country.

According to the official figures of India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021, a biennial Publication of Forest Survey of India (FSI), an organization under the Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, J&K has the highest carbon stock per unit of forest area in the country.

According to officials of the forest department, 73.16 lakh plants were planted in 2019-20, 101.98 lakh plants planted in 2020-21 and 137.20 lakh plants planted in 2021-22. J&K holds the most diverse forests in the country with 42 types of forests, denoting the diversity of forest ecosystems in the UT, and tops the list in terms of standing timber volume per unit area at 144.16 cubic meters. Forest cover has increased by 20 percent during the last year. As per the report, in the year 2019, the total forest area in J&K was 10.46 percent which has increased to 39.66 percent in the year 2020.

In 2021, The Forest Deptt covered 1000 villages under the program in all districts of J&K. Each territorial Forest Division adopted 35 revenue villages for planting material worth Rs 0.01 lakh, which include 600 saplings and 2000 seed balls including 1000 seed balls of grass species per village were planted, maintained and protected by PRIs/BMCs and locals.



JKPI Publications

UNDERSTANDING THE RISE IN FIRE INCIDENTS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR



ARKA CHAKRABORTY

In the first three months of the current year, there were no less than 146 fire incidents in the summer capital Srinagar, causing damage to property worth 2.5 billion rupees and also resulting in a number of deaths and injuries. Moreover, the last few years have seen a steady increase in the annual number of fire incidents. This trend, in tandem with the increase in residential fires across India, is alarming and necessitates an evaluation of fire safety measures followed (or ignored) towards enhancing the safety of people and the protection of properties.

Troubling fire incidents across Jammu and Kashmir

In late March, a short circuit led to a fire breaking out in a house located in the Noor Bagh area of Srinagar, quickly spreading to engulf 20 houses. Sustained efforts of no less than nine fire tenders for several hours led the fire to finally subside, although by that time massive property damage had already taken place. In a separate incident that evening, a case of fire broke out in the Rajouri Kadal area and caused damage to two houses. Earlier that month, another short circuit, this time in a scrap shop located in a lane opposite the Tourism Reception Centre on Residency Road, Jammu, led to an LPG cylinder blast, resulting in a massive fire that claimed the lives of four people, including a child, and landed 15 others in the Government Medical College, Jammu, having sustained burn injuries of various degrees. These incidents involving the loss of life and property are painfully familiar to J&K UT. The total number of such incidents recorded in 2021 was as high as 2058, where 1711 houses and 347 shops sustained damage along with 127 electric transformers and 57 cars. 75 people lost their lives and 21 others were injured. The estimated total value of the property involved in these incidents was 112.7 billion rupees, out of which the firefighters were able to save around 105.6 billion rupees while property worth Rs. 6.1 billion rupees were lost. The summer capital Srinagar was, unfortunately, the main center of these incidents, with 614 out of the 2058 incidents taking place there.

Moreover, a recent fire incident in Nigeen Lake led to several houseboats being burned to ashes, resulting in a loss of residence and livelihoods for the unfortunate owners. A lack of safety measures in the houseboats themselves and a severe lack of fire stations in the numerous lakes and rivers of J&K are the likely causes of incidents like these.

The rising incidents of fire outbreaks are not mere statistics, but it is important to remember that every single fire incident entails considerable risks and could lead to loss of livelihoods, homes, limbs, or even lives for innocent families. Keeping the massive humanitarian damage caused by fire incidents in mind, the likely causes of such incidents should be revisited in order to arrive at potentially viable solutions.

Causes of the increased fire incidents in J&K

A number of factors can be attributed to the rising number of fire incidents in recent years. These factors, although discussed separately, relate to and reinforce each other.

Population growth and Urbanization

Dr. Shujaat Hussain Buch, a civil engineer specializing in fire and



earthquake engineering, has traced a lot of the problems related to the rising number of residential fire incidents in Jammu and Kashmir to population growth in the region. The lack of space created by a rising urban population is generally compensated by the construction of multi-story buildings, without roads being widened. This creates a situation that increases the risk of fire hazards. Increased population also leads to the congestion and blockage of approach lanes, making it difficult for fire extinguishing mechanisms like fire brigades to reach fire-engulfed structures. This is especially the case in some new gated colonies which do not leave room for approach lanes. Thus, population growth leads to unplanned urban growth which itself leads to the congestion and blockage of approach lanes, leading to an increase in response time, ultimately resulting in more structures being engulfed in flames by the time firefighters can reach them. New townships and settlements at the fringes of cities are propping up in hilly areas where the topography makes it impossible for fire brigades to reach these settlements if the need arises.

Infrastructural negligence

While unplanned urban growth has made the task of effectively extinguishing the fire before it spreads to other structures difficult, some of the responsibility for rising fire incidents also has to lie with the common householder's long-term and quotidian decisions regarding residential infrastructure. A lack of mindfulness in these matters often leads to unfortunate but otherwise avoidable fire incidents.

In recent years, the main building material in the Valley has shifted from wood to concrete, which is generally considered an encouraging move with regard to maintaining fire safety. However, the use of wood and other combustible materials in the houses of Jammu and Kashmir has hardly decreased. The need for proper thermal insulation in concrete houses has given rise to paneling with wood, for example. Many also like to build their interior walls, floors and ceilings of wood for aesthetic reasons. Using old and faulty gas heaters can and do lead to leakages and fire incidents. Wiring is another important, but generally overlooked aspect of infrastructural awareness with many houses still having wiring systems that are twenty or thirty years old. When old wiring systems are not replaced with new, stronger systems but new gadgets like air conditioners are added to the ranks of electronic products in the household, the members of said households immensely increase the risk of short-circuiting the system and starting fires that may leave them homeless. The same can be said for private shop-owners as well. Keeping combustible materials like wood and coal in areas like the kitchen and the attic are also common mistakes that increase the risk of fire incidents,

Lack of proper Fire Extinguishing Mechanisms

According to a report by RMSI, different areas in India suffer from a shortage of fire extinguishing mechanisms. Jammu and Kashmir is no exception. Bashir Ahmad Shah, the Deputy Director of the Fire & Emergency Services Department, has stated that while the department has around 3000 personnel and 250 fire tendering vehicles currently in operation, the number needs to immediately increase to 5000 personnel and 300 fire tendering vehicles in order to fulfill the needs of the Union Territory. According to Shah, there are presently 114 fire tendering stations in the UT, with 23 of them being situated in Srinagar itself. However, most of these have not been registered as they are only makeshift arrangements. Moreover, even though the Fire & Emergency Services Department has submitted the government with 92 potential sites for new fire stations, no new fire station has been established for the last five years due to administrative reasons. The only River Fire Station that the former state had, if kept and upgraded, could have prevented recent fire incidents in like Nigeen lake, was shifted in 2008 to Kohna Khan and was kept in a makeshift arrangement. Finally and perhaps most importantly, most of the common householders do not bother to buy and install fire extinguishers in their homes which, if used at the proper time, may greatly diminish the pressure currently on the Fire & Emergency Services Department and ensure that potential cases of fire outbreaks will be dealt with at the local level. Sometimes, even institutional structures do not have proper fire safety mechanisms in place, putting a number of people associated with these institutions at great risk of losing livelihood, limb, or life. The unfortunate damages caused by a devastating fire earlier this year at Bone & Joint Hospital, Barzulla, is a good example of how institutional neglect puts people and property at risk.

Recommendations

As the trend of rising population density in the cities and resultant unplanned urbanization with little to no regard for fire safety mechanisms has shown no sign of changing its course so far, more and more places are likely to be outside the reach of the fire stations, especially if the ideal response time of 5-7 minutes is to be kept in mind. Hence, Dr. Shujaat Hussain Buch seems to suggest that the most effective solutions to this growing problem have to come from the individual, family and community levels.

1. Fire spreads in three stages: ignition (the first two minutes of fire, when it is just a spark), combustion (when the spark finds combustible material and starts to spread) and spread (when the fire engulfs more rooms, floors and eventually, multiple structures). Ideally, residential fires can and should be put out by the residents in the ignition stage if any real damage is to be avoided. To this end, every residence must have a fire extinguisher in it. They are cheap, easy to use and easy to maintain and can save life and property if the situation calls for it. Fire extinguishers should be kept in the kitchens as they have the most likely chances of ignition. Foam-based extinguishers are most effective in putting out residential fires. Able-bodied adult family members should train themselves in using these fire extinguishers in order to be effective if the need arises.

2. Combustible materials in houses should be removed as far as possible. There are many materials now available as alternatives to wood when it comes to paneling: these materials are fire-resistant and some are cheaper than wood. They are aesthetically pleasing as well. Wooden windows should be replaced by UPVC windows and glasses should be double-glazed. The kitchen door and other appliances should be made of non-combustible material. Even if portions of residential homes are made of wood, there are cheap but effective fire-resistant coatings available that should be used on these parts in order to prevent potential fire outbreaks. Combustible materials like wood, coal and other things should be removed from the attic. These should instead be kept in outhouses or trenches cut outside the houses in order to ensure safety. LPG cylinders should be kept outside the kitchen, ideally in an underground chamber dug out for this purpose outside the house. That way, even in the case of leakage or blast, the house will be comparatively safe.

3. The residents should have the condition of their wiring periodically checked by electricians and change the wiring if

necessary. Conduit wires should be used for protection against potential fires. Wires should not be placed on the ceiling below the wooden paneling as this greatly increases the risk of fire outbreaks.

4. At institutional levels, fire safety mechanisms must be in place, in order to ensure this, Bashir Ahmad Shah opines that NOCs should be obtained from the Fire & Emergency Services Department in order to establish commercial or other institutions. Not only should fire safety mechanisms be in place but staffers or other members of the institution should be trained in operating these mechanisms in order to prevent fire from spreading should it be ignited. At college and University levels, volunteer squads of willing students should be trained in the use of these mechanisms to create an effective internal defense against such hazards.

5. Dr. Buch opines that local support systems can and should be developed at the community level to prevent residential fires. For example, community leaders and youth can be trained in fire safety mechanisms and practices. A community water reservoir should be also established to counter potential fire hazards. Neighbors and acquaintances can discourage each other from violating fire safety norms. The well-to-do in community should come forward to help those who lost their property and homes in fire incidents.

While the most effective immediate solutions to fire hazards at this point should come from local and community levels, there is also room for the administration to take more responsibility in ensuring that fire hazards can be decreased in the long run.

6. The first and foremost duty of the government is to properly rehabilitate the victims of fire hazards.

7. The administration should engage in awareness drives to make citizens aware of the importance of adhering to fire safety rules and employing fire safety mechanisms. These awareness drives can also make people aware of how to make infrastructural adjustments in their households to reduce the risk of fire hazards.

8. The government can also encourage and, if possible, partially finance, the establishment of community-level fire safety mechanisms.

9. Increased emphasis must be placed on ensuring that the manpower and technological needs of the Fire & Emergency Services Department be met. To this end, new fire stations as per the recommendations of the department should be established, new personnel recruited and properly trained and high-tech vehicles are made available at the district level. Special emphasis should be placed on establishing River Fire Stations, given the importance of houseboats for UT's economy.

10. Strict rules should be established requiring NOCs to be issued by the Fire & Emergency Services Department for any residential or commercial establishment to operate so that the implementation of fire safety mechanisms may be monitored. Special emphasis should be laid on bringing houseboats under the ambit of these rules, since the Nigeen lake incident has made it painfully clear that they are not immune from fire hazards.

11. Future urban planning must be sensitive toward potential fire hazards and structural challenges like widening approach lanes and choosing friendly topography for fire stations to ensure reduced response time must be implemented.

Conclusion

In the wake of devastating fire outbreaks in Jammu and Kashmir, it is high time for stakeholders at every level, ranging from government authorities to individual householders, to implement changes to ensure that the tragedies that have triggered the renewed discussion on this issue do not repeat themselves. Keeping in mind the terrible human cost of these incidents, the stakeholders at various levels must cooperate with a shared understanding of the urgency of the situation. Special emphasis, in these coordinated efforts, must be laid on empowering not only the Fire & Emergency Services Department but individuals and communities at the local level so that fire incidents can be prevented easily. Only by sustained, coordinated, and compassionate efforts can it be hoped that potential fire incidents are minimized.

How and why 'climate change' has become a 'national security' issue of great significance



YASHI SINGH

"The world you and I live in is increasingly challenged. Population growth, pollution, over-consumption, unsustainable patterns, social conflict, climate change, loss of nature...these are not good stories." – Jack Dangermond

Globally, we have entered the age wherein the meaning of "security" has been upended. As a result, the States have renewed their understanding of national security in a holistic sense. Food Security, Energy Security, Water Security, and Climate Security are some of the human security concerns that have been recently included in the global security agenda. These concerns formally called Non-Traditional Security (NTS) challenges are non-military and can result in political instability or exacerbate the existing conflict in any nation. The Non-Traditional Security challenges can majorly be bifurcated into 1) Environmental Security 2) Social Security 3) Economic Security.

There is a conspicuous understanding of the food-water-energy nexus and how it emerges as a concern for a nation's security, but there is very less literature available explaining climate change as a security concern; likely to erupt into armed conflict.

Warning that people and countries most vulnerable to climate change also are most vulnerable to terrorist recruitment and violence, nearly 60 speakers in an open debate on December 19th, 2021 told the Security Council that the negative synergy between the two crises threatens to undermine States and international security itself, as the 15-nation organ considered a draft resolution proposed by Niger and Ireland on the matter.

Climate Change and National Security

Sri Lanka has long been experiencing public unrests, coups, economic quandaries, genocide, and ethnic cleansing of Tamils, and now the Food and Energy crisis has aggravated the current economic crisis and poses a "threat multiplier" to the Country's national security. The crisis in Sri Lanka reminds us of the Water conflict between the water-scarce co-riparian States; Israel, Syria, and Jordan. The problem started when the aforementioned regions built their water schemes to either transport the water or divert the Jordan and the Yarmouk River. The Jordan River Drainage Basin became a point of water conflict which also contributed to the famous six days of the war, also known as the Israeli-Arab War. The conflict caused prolonged hostility in the region for over seventy years. However, the collective action of Israel and Jordan through their 1994 Peace Treaty, the 2013 Red Sea-Dead Conveyance project, and the NGO Master Plan Report have ensured a beneficial and sustainable resolution to the problem for all parties involved.

Similarly, the Water Conflict between India-Pakistan started at the Indus River Basin in the 1960s and the occasional bouts of diplomatic tensions can still be seen today. However, the two countries signed Indus Water Treaty to create an understanding of the cooperation for sharing the water from all the six rivers in the Indus River Basin. With both climate change impacts and populations on the rise, it has become vital for India and Pakistan to hammer out the treaty; as the water demand is increasing and it is becoming difficult for both the countries to enable a fair distribution

of the water resources between people, especially farmers.

The environmental crisis is considered the main reason for the continued migration of people from Bangladesh to India. Scarcity of land and water in the rural areas of Bangladesh, caused by rapid population growth, environmental change, unequal resource distribution and development, widespread landlessness, unemployment, declining wages and income, growing income disparities, and degradation of human habitat are among the crises that lead the migration of people from Bangladesh to India. The affected people, unable to satisfy their needs in an economically less-developed Bangladesh, are increasingly moving to India where the prospect of life appears to be better. Studies suggest that this flow of population would continue unabated, perhaps at a greater rate, unless remedial measures are taken in the places of origin of the migrants. According to experts, almost 17% of the landmass in Bangladesh, especially the areas near the coastal areas will be submerged under the water by the end of the 21st century. Also, in the Maldives around 500000 people are exposed to vulnerability as 80% of the landmass in the Maldives is well-nigh one meter above sea level. India having a stronghold in South Asia will have to immediately address the flow of "climate refugees" from both Bangladesh and Maldives.

Migration can hamper the resources of a nation absorbing the "environmental refugees". As the population will rise with the migration, there can be a contestation to acquire resources, mostly from lower strata and such a situation will disrupt the economy and social framework. The social and economic tensions are the primary causes of crime and violence. There are 700 million internal migrants around the globe who have left their habitats because of environmental driven factors like drought, flood, desertification, water insecurity, etc. (UN Human Development Report, 2012)

Climate Change and Armed Conflict

Climate change multiplies the crisis or the conflict. It can divert a country from the military strategies at the time of disasters like floods, melting of the glaciers, extreme temperatures, and cyclones. Such unfavorable climatic events can change the course of military positioning in disaster-prone areas and can also tamper with military establishments and assets. E.g., If country A is in conflict with country B and hypothetically, the former country has better military development, forte, and assets than the latter one. In this scenario, if the military of both nations is deployed in the border area prone to extremely low temperatures, then the country B has to face the brunt of low temperatures and its indirect effect including changing strategical positioning, changing its military establishments, and the nation B's dearth in its capabilities will always put it in jeopardy. It can also add to conflict if nation A gets to apprehend the unpreparedness of nation B.

A paper published in 2015 has shown that change in temperatures and precipitation patterns increases the chance of conflict. Furthermore, every 1 degree Celsius increase in temperature shoots up the conflict between groups by 11.3%. (Marshall Burke, Solomon M. Hsiang, Edward Miguel, 2015). The paper asserts that climate change multiplies the threat and the crisis per se. Also, the path to simmer down the political and economic instability will contribute to peace concomitant with the efforts of addressing the climate change issue as a foreign policy demarche.

In the light of recent events in the African continent, a powerful connection between climate change and armed conflict is quite evident. The region around the Sahel, has continuous periods of desertification, droughts, precipitation, and soil erosion, leading to poor productivity of agriculture, at a time when the majority of the population is dependent on agriculture for employment. This phenomenon led to a civil war in Sudan that lasted up to the 1980s. Darfur saw the worst famine with an estimated death of 100000, the crisis further stirred a mass migration and the large population of Arab pastoralists migrated to the lands of settled farmers named the "fur tribes". Thus, sparking ethnic violence among both communities. The government supported the Arab pastoralists turned militias who



ignited the situation through bombings on civilian areas including West and south of North Darfur covering Jebel Marra and Kabkabia. They intended to clear the lands inhabited by farmers settled in the region. The armed conflict killed almost 300000 and 2.5 million got dislocated. Last year, 83 people died as the tension heightened across the region.

As we move towards the West in Africa, which is Nigeria, Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, the food security issues, malnutrition, and water scarcity is ubiquitous around Lake Chad Basin. Climate change has brought about such issues and has contributed to mass killings, abductions, and the growth of terrorist organizations. President Buhari of Chad was concerned about youth joining terrorist organizations because of the absence of employment and necessities like food and water. Employment in Africa largely hinges on Agriculture and production. The kidnapping of 343 boys in Nigeria was a down spiral event when Africa is already surviving coups, instability, and economic crisis. One thing which cannot be ignored is the recriminations flying back and forth by the kidnapers, stating the killing of their cattle and how different groups disturb them.

CONCLUSION

We know of plenty of agreements and treaties drafted with the intention to protect the environment. All such treaties and agreements were either based on hard law or soft law principles. Stockholm Declaration in 1972 for the environment and development acted as a springboard for the other stakeholders to start seeing a slight connection between the environment and armed conflict in a sense that they addressed the issues of the impact of armed conflicts, war, and violence on the environment. Three such treaties are Stockholm Declaration 1972, The World Charter for Nature 1982, and Rio Declaration 1992.

It took a long time for the scientists to assess the consequences of climate change resulting in armed conflicts and yet there are many states casting uncertainty on the link between climate change and conflict. Last year in February 2021, Boris Johnson,

Prime Minister of the United Kingdom stated “climate change as a geopolitical issue” and further asked the member states to not shy away from the subject. It is not wise for the governments and policymakers to outrightly deny the linkage between climate change and armed conflict though there is no direct role of climate change in initiating armed conflicts or violence. There is still elbow room for relevant stakeholders to carry out their integrated research analysis on observing how the conflict and climate change have converged over the last decade. The issue of linking climate change and armed conflict should not be exaggerated and a strong research infrastructure is needed to not have superficial discussions. The key factors that need to be taken into account include identifying the crucial groups, the rewards benefitting the group or individual from the violence and conflict, resources at stake, quantitative data, societal structure, degree of violence and conflict, and resource competition in the region.

The Indian military has begun to recognize the threat posed by environmental change, mostly after 2014’s Cyclone Hudhud, which destroyed the airbase at India’s Eastern Naval Command. The damage cost US\$ 300 million to the Indian Navy. The policymakers have comprehended how climate change can manipulate the battlefield and hence, the adversary can attack critical points while taking advantage of environmental disasters due to climate change. Siachen being a vital point for India and Pakistan, is vulnerable to glacier melting which causes the water level in the downstream river to vary suddenly resulting in limiting the Indian army’s range. Understanding the fact that obscurity can leave military camps in peril, the Joint Doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces was drafted in 2017 to acknowledge climate change as a “critical area of security paradigm”.

The unique approach to national security complies with Kautilya’s Arthashastra wherein he has mentioned the prime importance of food and environmental security and has stated that mountains and rivers can be used as a tool to protect the nation and thus can be utilized in forming operational strategies to both defend and attack.

IN ABSENCE OF FORMAL POLICY ON FIRE SAFETY IN KASHMIR, PEOPLE ARE BOUND TO SUFFER DISPROPORTIONATELY



ADEELA HAMEED

A growing number of fire incidents in the Kashmir Valley has set the alarm bells ringing. The crowded housing conditions in urban areas has intensified the ever-present and constantly accelerating challenges of fire safety in Kashmir. With no formal policy for ensuring fire safety in the Valley and inflammable material all around, people are bound to suffer at one time or another. From building norms to safety standards applicable to residential properties, fire safety standards related to electrical and mechanical systems, and fire safety standards for commercial set-ups and offices – there's a lot being ignored by the concerned authorities and people, at large, as well. The administration has had enough time to come up with alternatives and strong policy measures, yet there is no consolation felt by the people.

While there is no deficiency of fire stations in the UT, there is an absence of a formal policy on the fire safety. With building/housing norms ignored conveniently because of the absence of strong legislation on the subject, there is little the Fire & Emergency Services, J&K, department can do. In fact, many important government and public service institutions are also ill-equipped to fight, prevent fires and respond effectively to the blazes. On top of it, owing to scrambled power distribution networks, fires can start any time of the year, especially in winters when excessive load causes service lines to heat up.

Figures on fire incidents in Kashmir valley

Statements released by Fire and Emergency Department reveal that from 1st January to 31st December 2021, 75 people died and 21 others were injured in different fire incidents across the Valley. About 1711 houses and 347 shops were also gutted. Over 127 electric transformers and 57 cars were damaged in different fire incidents. Firefighters, on the other hand, saved property worth Rs 1056 crore in 2021.

In 2019 and 2020, the Valley witnessed 1833 and 1900 fire incidents, respectively. But the number of incidents rose to 2058 in 2021 which is 7.6% higher than in 2020. Properties involved were worth Rs 1127 crore, of which about Rs 61 crore was damaged, and the rest salvaged. Out of all fire incidents in 2021, 614 occurred in Srinagar.

Although the Fire and Emergency Services Department is equipped with 230 water tenders including 10 bikes and 5 boats, still it gets difficult to control a fire, if fire brigade fails to reach the inferno on time. There are almost 2200 firefighters in Jammu and Kashmir who work in shifts. Some have to work a 24-hour shift once or twice a week.

Fire Safety Audit

In 2016, to assure fire safety standards, the National Building Code suggested a periodical fire safety inspection by the personnel residents of the buildings.

- A list of fire safety rules for building owners had been made necessary by the government:
- Residents must conduct fire safety audits half-yearly and submit the report to the regulated fire department;
- A comprehensive fire safety audit shall address the fire safety

hazards due to the daily activities of occupants and will recommend and suggest measures to reduce fire occurrences;

Hazard identification and risk assessment shall focus on identifying potential hazards;

Every municipal corporation with a population of more than 10 lakh should put in place a fire hazard response and prevention plan for their respective jurisdictions;

The urban local bodies must extend financial support to the state fire services department;

Part of the grant allocated by the finance commission to the urban local bodies shall be used for renewing the fire services in their jurisdiction.

Fire Safety Standards and Preventive Measures

Some other measures taken for the prevention of fire hazards are as follows:

In December 2020, the Supreme Court asked all states to carry out fire safety audits;

The health ministry circulated guidelines demanding a third party accreditation for fire safety;

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) stipulated requirements for fire safety in hospitals and other public buildings.

Although India has a plethora of fire safety guidelines, they are rarely followed. Several big fires are, in fact, caused by a lack of compliance with fire safety rules, some of which end in tragedy.

Talking about Kashmir, the government and concerned authorities must push for the implementation of fire safety standards that are neglected by the people, builders as well as government officials. While much responsibility rests on the Power Development Department to ensure that fires due to faulty lines are prevented, people must also share the responsibility and see to it that all flammable material is stored properly.

The lack of proper government policies for preparedness, prevention, mitigation, and prompt response to fire mishaps is proving expensive for everyone. Therefore, much attention is required to tie up loose ends. Such as:

- Lack of unified fire services
- Inadequate funding
- Lack of public awareness
- Vulnerability analysis not performed
- Lack of proper organizational structure, training of personnel
- Inadequate modern equipment
- Lack of infrastructure
- Lack of uniform fire safety legislation

Recommendations

Advance Planning

A fire can start in an instant and continue to rage until its fuel source is depleted, destroying homes and property, causing injuries and taking lives within a matter of seconds. Find out what you're meant to do ahead of time by checking with the building management and fire department. If a fire is detected, call the fire department and raise the alarm. Pay attention and obey instructions if you hear them over the public address system in your building/area. It's conceivable that you'll be recommended to remain in your current location.

1. Be prepared and adopt three important measures (Fire Detectors, First Aid, and Fire Fighting System) for timely intervention to minimize the adverse impacts of fires.
2. Recognize the location and function of the fire alarms in the building/area.
3. Get to know the sound of the building/area's fire sirens.
4. Make sure that everyone in your house knows where to go in the event of a fire alarm, and that you all practice your escape plan

together. Each building's administration should post evacuation plans where everyone can see them.

5. Some evacuation strategies may require you to enter the building and wait for firemen to supervise your escape in a "safe area."
6. Know at least two exits from each of the rooms in your flat/house.
7. Count the number of doors between your apartment/house and the nearest exit. There's a chance you'll have to flee a fire in the dark.
8. In certain high-rise situations, staying there and shielding oneself from the flames until the fire department comes is the safest option.
9. Determine who is responsible for maintaining your building/area's fire safety systems, such as fire/smoke check doors, fire alarms, emergency lights, and fire sprinklers, up to date. Always keep a fire extinguisher handy at home/office/commercial complexes.
10. Don't be afraid to report the fire as soon as you notice it. If the situation persists, get assistance from your local fire department.
11. Check if anything is obstructing or interfering with the fire suppression systems within or outside the building.

Exits

It is never a good idea to lock or block fire exits. Garbage should be kept out of the escape route. In the case of a fire, fire doors not only provide a means of escape but also aid to reduce the spread of the fire's and smoke's effects. A fire door should never be propped open.

If A Fire Breaks Out Elsewhere

Usually, staying in your own apartment/house is the safest alternative. However, if your residence is impacted by heat or smoke, leave at once, and shut all windows and doors behind you.

Conclusion

Fire Safety Audits should be made mandatory, and the auditing job should be given to third-party businesses having prior experience in the sector. Once a year, each tenant should do a fire safety audit. Above all, the effectiveness of fire prevention and firefighting is strongly reliant on the active engagement of all residents and employees. HIRA (Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment) is an approach for detecting and analyzing possible dangers. A thorough fire safety audit may detect the inherent fire dangers that come with day-to-day workplace operations and provide ways to reduce the risk of fire.



LET SOLIDARITY BE YOUR TRUTH



ULVEE MUNEER

The world is full of so many staggering problems. Everyone wants to make things better in the world, except the people present at the top of the power pyramid. Colonialism has done a violent bifurcation of the world into a zone of being – ‘The west’ and a zone of non-being – ‘The other.’ Such categorization results in a persistent categorical and discriminatory discourse which is reflected in various social and economic structures. These structures promulgate ideas that people subconsciously accept without even questioning their foundation. Unfortunately, these structures have given rise to specific forces and notions in the society that have left people divided into the lines of nationalism, racism, capitalism, etc. These narratives have ardently infected the mindset of people with needing to know where someone is from and what they look like before one should care what happens to them and whether they need Solidarity.

HOW DOES THE STATE AUGMENT THESE IDEAS?

Any violence state uses are considered legitimate and can be quickly legalised by labelling it as necessary for the welfare of the people living in the society. Mainstream media unequivocally strengthens these notions. The law believes that accepting what the state has written down, asking the state for permission to do something, and fearing those who the state has found guilty are always morally correct. In this regard, assuredly, media echoes the language of the state. The state has gained its legitimacy through various constructed processes and structures. Authority has no principle other than its power. For that matter, even the envisioned order that prevails in the status quo under the state is primarily aimed at continuing these power structures, which exist to serve the authority at the expense of others. In this context, the country is a perfect example of authority where we are taught to believe in it, in a way where it fabricates the line of divide between people who belong to different nationalities (us v/s them), making one prey to patriotic conceptions which at times results in nationalist violence and unfortunately makes people of different races unemphatic towards each other. Everyone one of us has been conditioned in an environment that lamentably aligns with these ideas of state. Furthermore, we have been absorbing such ideas in our schools as well. In schools, we are taught myths and lies about how these power structures work solely for the betterment of the people.

We need to question such narratives as to why we have to be divided and turn antagonists because people are from different backgrounds. We have a problem; we live in an epoch where the mainstream education system doesn't offer you a chance to think in ways that are outside the proclaimed norms. Everything we have been taught is because people in power want us to think that way. In our subconscious minds, we need to dismantle these structures, at least intelligently undermine them.

Now, if we probe deeper, we realise that, at times, humans have proven that they can do anything tangible if

worked collectively. Collectivisation now becomes essential to come out of these state-constructed belief systems. In collectivisation, people need to take a holistic approach to any conflict happening across the globe. Purely inculcating an individual approach for solving social problems probably fails every time; as Audre Lorde says, “There is no such struggle as single-issue struggle.” Moreover, in this paradigm, if we extensively kingpin the overlapping lines of the problem, people will be more empathetic towards the stakeholders, irrespective of their background.

As one needs to understand how the dehumanisation of any community or individual largely convulses our own humanity in tangible ways. The dehumanisation of some has constantly opened the potential for any one of us to be dehumanised, preferably at any point in time. For example, the dehumanisation of Muslims in India has enabled the nation to herald various heinous activities against them, ultimately eroding human rights broadly. It is not simply the “democratic freedom” of Muslims which is being attacked but democracy more broadly. It was the dehumanisation of colonial subjects and the ability of European powers to abuse human beings in other parts of the world that created more propensity for them to do the same thing at home. All this makes us acknowledge how every issue is interconnected, and there is a need for all of us to stand up in solidarity for each other's rights. Therefore, when this line of commonality is established, it brings the relatability factor to us. This connective link eventually binds people together even more robust, thereby paving the way to a more substantial shock value where the propensity of reforms is significantly likely to occur.

WHAT IS SOLIDARITY?

Solidarity is when we treat the liberation struggle of others as our own. It's about identifying and undermining sources of oppression and aiding people fighting or escaping it. Sadly, Solidarity in today's world is being squandered, because it's impacted by the power structures. In this context, let us make a case study on Ukraine. Initially, when the war broke out, the status quo was flooded with suggestions to punish all the people with any affiliation with Russia at all; for that matter, the focus was only on deporting students and workers with zero connections with Putin. This conception of collective punishment only disrupted the idea of actual Solidarity and humanity. Just because an individual belongs to the land where Putin claims the ownership, we necessarily cannot leave them on their own in the state of conflict. Moreover, the wars and disputes across the globe are essentially pigeonholed under unconscious racism. We don't notice until we choose or are forced to see it for what it is; we don't notice.

We need to question, why doesn't the media tell us about the war going on in other regions? There are even more significant conflicts that are taking place. Not that we shouldn't talk about Ukraine, but wars happening in the different areas are equally important. Why don't we see much discourse on Yemen, Syria, Palestine, etc.? Is it because the war happening in these regions is backed by a world hegemon, and people who belong to these nations belong to different races and religions and are not inherently white?

We need to fortify the perception that we as individuals have to show Solidarity for people, not the nation-states, as they vehemently are the constructed structures that add to the dehumanisation process. If we follow solidarity as a principle, we have a chance of winning against the forces that divide us into the lines of nationalism, liberalism, capitalism, racism etc.

LIFE AROUND THE WULAR LAKE



BILAL DAR

