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J&K FIRST TO HAVE A COMPREHENSIVE DRUG DE-ADDICTION POLICY AFTER PUNJAB

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir becomes the first Union Territory in the country, after Punjab state, having a comprehensive drug de-addiction policy envisaged to weed out this atrocious menace from the society.

The urgency to formulate a drug de-addiction policy by Jammu and Kashmir government is due to the location of the UT in the vicinity of "Golden Crescent", a name given to South Asia's opium-producing countries like Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan which produces 80 percent of the world's opium and is considered as the prime source of illicit drug trade.

J&K government has intensified its efforts to fight narco-terrorism being unleashed by unscrupulous elements from across neighboring countries. It has come out with a detailed mechanism to supervise and review implementation of Drug De-addiction Policy and has even roped in civil society members in the endeavor so that drug menace is fought effectively.

Giving further details in this regard, an official informed that "UT Level Policy Implementation Monitoring Committee and Jammu and Kashmir Division Level De-addiction Centre Monitoring Committees have been constituted. The UT level committee has been assigned the task of suggesting changes in the Drug De-addiction Policy from time to time besides looking out for financial support for various de-addiction activities in Jammu and Kashmir, he added.

These committees have been assigned the task of inspecting the existing de-addiction facilities in Jammu and Kashmir and grant or cancel licenses after thorough inspection of infrastructure, manpower and standards of care. The committees have also been entrusted with the task of advising various stakeholders from time to time in implementation of Drug De-addiction Policy on ground and look at monitoring of prescription drug abuse and suggest remedial measures to the Drug Controller," an official said.

The policy also focuses on various key aspects including prevention, rehabilitation and integration, training and sensitization, community participation, generating awareness and upgradation/establishment of drug de-addiction centers.

"It lays out a comprehensive action plan for addressing the drug

addiction issue in its entirety. There has been a steep rise in physical, mental and substance-use disorders over the past two decades across the UT. There has been an alarming shift in the pattern of substance use in terms of rise in the number of female users, decreasing age at first use, increasing use of solvents, injectable-opiates and use of steroids as well as increasing drug-related deaths (over-dose and accidents)," the official said.

For effective surveillance and law enforcement, the government has also constituted the Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF) in coordination with the Excise and Agriculture departments to map the expected cultivation areas and take remedial actions in terms of destruction of illegal crops on both private and government lands.

The ANTF has further been asked to formulate an action plan to prevent such cultivation in the next season. The ANTF will also undertake extensive awareness generation drives to inform the public about the associated risks and issues and accordingly plan a calendar of activities.

"The Task Force will institutionalize the mechanism for promoting wide-ranged reporting on illegal cultivation, transportation, trade and consumption of drugs and their synthetic derivatives; through NGOs, PRIs and Volunteers," policy reads.

"It can be said that major improvements in health can only be addressed by broad-based impacts that benefit both high-risk groups and the general public. In this regard, Jammu and Kashmir has taken a lead by addressing this serious societal issue on a large scale," the official said.

In the words of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, his administration is fully committed to strengthen action framework and take a firm stance against drug abuse, besides providing practical solutions like evidence-based prevention, treatment and care to emerge as a winner in achieving the goal of a drug-free society.

In his message on International Day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, LG called upon the people from all walks of life to supplement government's efforts towards its fight against the menace of drug abuse.





J&K to host G-20 meetings in 2023

In a significant development, Jammu and Kashmir will be hosting the 2023 meetings of G-20, an influential grouping that brings together the world's major economies, with the Union Territory government Thursday setting up a five-member high level committee for overall coordination.

This will be the first major international summit to be held in Jammu and Kashmir after the erstwhile state's special status guaranteed under Article 370 of the Constitution was withdrawn and it was divided into two union territories in August 2019.

In September last year, Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal was appointed as India's Sherpa for the G20. The Ministry of External Affairs had said that India will hold the G20 presidency from December 1, 2022, and will convene the G20 leaders' summit in 2023 for the first time.

According to an official order issued here on Thursday, the Union Territory's housing and urban development department principal secretary will be the chairman of the committee which was formed in response to a June 4 communication from the Ministry of External Affairs.

"Sanction is hereby accorded to the constitution of a committee...for overall co-ordination of G-20 meetings to be held in the Union Territory of J&K," the order issued by

Principal Secretary, General Administration Department, Manoj Kumar Dwivedi said. The members of the committee include Commissioner Secretary (Transport), Administrative Secretary (Tourism), Administrative Secretary (Hospitality and Protocol) and Administrative Secretary (Culture).

"Further, principal secretary to the government, housing and urban development department is also nominated as UT level nodal officer to coordinate the arrangements for G-20 meetings in the Union Territory of J&K," the order said.

Prime Minister Modi has been leading India's representation at G20 summits since 2014. India has been a member of the G20 since its inception in 1999.

According to the MEA, India will be part of the G20 Troika (preceding, current, and incoming G20 Presidencies) from December 1, 2021 till November 30, 2024.

G20 brings together 19 of the world's leading economies and the European Union, with its members accounting for more than 80 per cent of global GDP, 75 percent of global trade and 60 percent of the global population, according to the MEA.

The G20 member nations are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Hosting G-20 summit privilege for J&K: LG

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said it was a matter of privilege for the union territory to host the G-20 summit in 2023 and asserted that the administration would put in every effort to make it a grand event.

Jammu and Kashmir will be hosting the 2023 meetings of G-20, an influential grouping that brings together the world's major economies, with the union territory administration on Thursday setting up a five-member high-level committee for overall coordination.

This will be the first major international summit to be held in J&K after its special status guaranteed under Article 370 of the Constitution was withdrawn and the erstwhile state was divided into two union territories in August 2019.

"It is a very good beginning. It is a matter of privilege for us that we will get the opportunity to host the G-20 summit. We have framed a committee and we will put in all our efforts to make it grand," Sinha told reporters here.

Earlier in the day, LG said that maximum youth will get jobs in the coming days as the government will roll out a job policy soon.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function at Magam in Central Kashmir's Budgam district, LG said that

in the coming days, government will roll out a job policy and maximum number of youth will get jobs.

He, however, added that qualified youth must give up the mind-set of waiting for the government jobs.

He stressed that the development in the UT can happen only in a peaceful environment.

"If there is no peace, then rest assured no power on earth can bring in development to the place. There are some people who do not like this. They do not want peace here, they want violence. J&K's welfare is in this, we can progress and come closer to or overcome other nations only when there is peace here," he said.

Sinha said if the UT returns to the phase of strikes and shutdowns and violence, "then those days which were very painful, may have to be seen again".

"I appeal to people to remain cautious of these elements. They are not your friends, they want to create hurdles in the way to peace on the directions from the outside. There is a very less number of such people and I want to tell you that our administration and security forces are committed to protect the common man. We will not touch the innocent, that is our policy, but it is our policy as well that the culprits will not be spared in any way," he said.

The LG appealed to people to stand with the government to take J&K on the path to peace and prosperity.

"I assure you that we will not rest till we make J&K a progressive region," he added.

KVIB establishing industrial ecosystem across J&K to nurture budding entrepreneurs

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Khadi & Village Industries Board (KVIB) is establishing and nurturing an entrepreneurial ecosystem under micro and village industries sector across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

KVIB has an important role in Employment Generation, through various schemes they are implementing in J&K.

KVIB significantly improves Sustainable development of Village and Traditional Industries by planning, promoting and organising Khadi, Village and Micro Industries Sector. They facilitate creation of employment opportunities for unemployed youth, artisans by helping them to establish their own village/micro industrial units.

As per KVIB, artisans are empowered to produce customer-savvy products and foster a strong rural community spirit by establishing a sustainable and dynamic village and traditional industries sector.

He added that KVIB helps in improve design and productivity of khadi and village industries sector.

Government of India has approved the introduction of a new credit-linked subsidy programme called Prime Ministers Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) by merging the two schemes -Prime Ministers Rojgar Yojana (PMRY) and Rural Employment Generation Programme (REGP) for generation of employment opportunities through establishment of micro enterprises in rural as well as urban areas.

PMEGP is a central sector scheme administered by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MoMSME). The Scheme is

implemented by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), a statutory organization under the administrative control of the Ministry of MSME as the single nodal agency at the National level.

The Government subsidy under the scheme is routed by KVIC through the identified Banks for eventual distribution to the beneficiaries/entrepreneurs in their Bank accounts. The Implementing Agencies, KVIC, KVIBs and DICs associate reputed Non-Government Organization (NGOs)/reputed autonomous institutions/Self Help Groups (SHGs)/National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC)/Udyami Mitras empanelled under Rajiv Gandhi Udyami Mitra Yojana (RGUMY), Panchayati Raj institutions and other relevant bodies in the implementation of the Scheme, especially in the area of identification of beneficiaries, of area specific viable projects, and providing training in entrepreneurship development. Thirty-one year old Farida Akhtar had set-up Anna's Boutique with the help of KVIB which is considered as a trend setter in Dooru area of Anantnag.

"I am happy that I am an entrepreneur, but it was not an easy task for me. I worked for several years under a local tailor, who taught me basics of dressmaking, but it was absolutely traditional tailoring," said Farida, adding that her passion in dressmaking motivated her to learn out of the way designing with the help of KVIB.

Similarly, Nardeep Singh setup a unit 'Singh Hydraulic Equipments' with the help of KVIB to become self-sufficient. He says, "businesses that manage to stick with pains and gains last longest and shine brightest."

Playgrounds being constructed in every Panchayat to nurture talent of budding sportspersons of J&K

SRINAGAR, JUNE 28: To encourage and motivate the sports-loving youth of J&K to choose sports as a profession, J&K Government is constructing one playground in each Panchayat of UT to nurture the talent.

"For the promotion of sports at the grass-roots level, each panchayat has been provided with sports kits during the Back to Village-3 as per the local requirements. The rapid promotion of sports in J&K, especially in the rural sector, has developed a sense of hope that the J&K will bring laurels from national and international tournaments," said a government official.

"The sports policy of J&K has laid a vision for promoting excellence in traditional sports like Kho-Kho, Kabaddi, Archery, Mud Wrestling & Tug of War. Emphasis is laid down on developing facilities for coaching of these sports across the UT. The talent of rural youth is scouted and nurtured in coaching camps for national competitions. Financial assistance is also being provided for achieving excellence in these sports," the official said.

According to the policy, opportunities would be provided to all citizens – urban and rural to participate in sports and games and organize sports competitions at the Panchayat, zonal, district, State/UT, National & International levels.

The J&K Sports Policy 2022 paves way for an inclusive mandate for prescribing universal wellness and fitness through sports & fitness activities, at the panchayat, zonal, district, division, UT, national &

international levels. According to the policy, DYSS shall develop and maintain sport & fitness zones at the Panchayat, village and block levels.

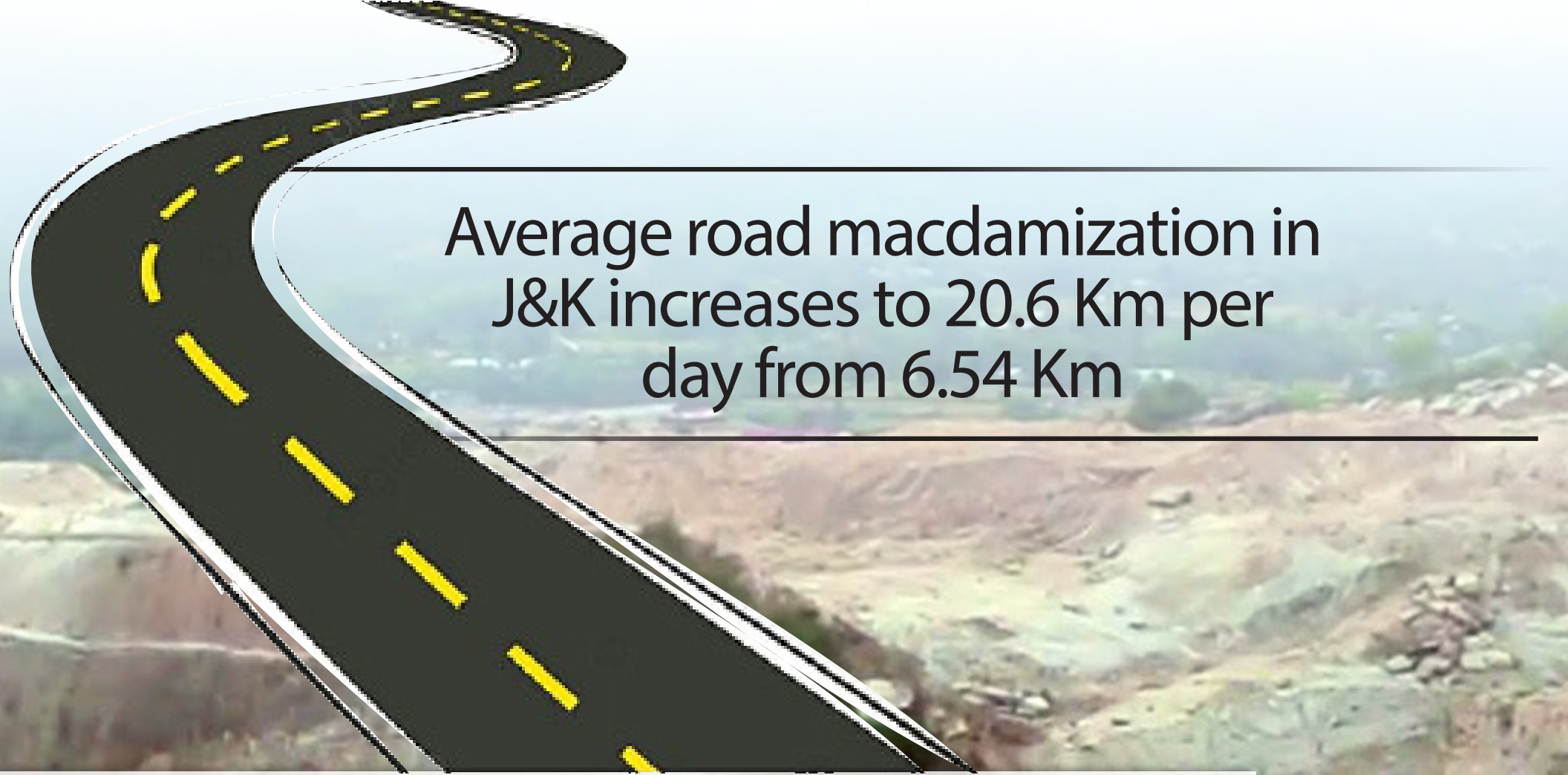
The Government has taken a number of steps in this regard such as ensuring at least one playfield in every Panchayat, establishing over 4500 Youth Clubs and organising of number of sporting activities to enable the youth of the J&K to participate in sporting activities

The youth of Jammu and Kashmir have immense sports potential with many players from the UT representing the country in different sports. J&K is witnessing a new revolution in the Sports Sector. The UT is equally equipped as other states of the country and has potential to produce world-class sportspersons.

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

With the combination of world-class facilities, coaches and continuous monitoring and mentoring, J&K Govt is creating an environment of empowerment, leadership and self-esteem among youth.

The recently established sports infrastructure and facilities in J&K are historic. In addition to infrastructure and resources, world-class training is indispensable for producing world-class talent.



Average road macadamization in J&K increases to 20.6 Km per day from 6.54 Km

SRINAGAR: The average road macadamization in J&K has been increased to 20.6 km per day in last three years as compared to 6.54 km per day before 2019, which reflects the progressing development happening across Jammu and Kashmir.

According to official data, road length in J&K has increased to 41,141 kilometres and the percentage of blacktop roads has reached to 74 percent as compared to 66 percent in 2019.

Under Pothole free road programme, a target of 5900 kilometres was made for 2021-22 of which 4600 kilometres of road length has been made pothole-free till date.

Remarkably, Jammu and Kashmir has once again been ranked among top three performing States/UTs at national level for construction of road length per year under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

J&K Maintained its rank for the second consecutive year as the Public Works Department (R&B) constructed PMGSY road length of 3284 kms during the year 2021-22 and connected 114 habitations through road networks by executing 427 schemes in the year.

Under PMGSY, an average 9 kms of road length was constructed per day, which was slightly higher than the achievement for the year 2020-21 with an average of 8.67 kms per day and 119 habitations were connected under PMGSY with 3167 kms of road length constructed.

With the construction of tunnels and macadamization as well as expansion of Srinagar-Jammu national highway, the average layover for trucks on is now less than 12 hours which earlier was 24-72 hours. The travelling time for passengers on the national highway has been reduced to 5.50 hours from 7-12 hours prior to 2019.

Moreover, four National Highway projects are being completed during 2022. Execution of Delhi-Amritsar Katra Expressway is being taken up. Under Bharat Mala, 10 new road/tunnel projects were agreed upon by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. All habitations with over 1000 population (as per the 2011

census) have been provided road connectivity. The provision of road connectivity for the habitations with 500 population by 2022-23 is also being taken up.

The Public Works Department of J&K has embarked on a mission to reach out to unconnected habitations with road connectivity, strengthen and expand the intra UT road network, especially in rural & remote areas.

The Public Works (R&B) Department has achieved considerable targets and achievements under various schemes /programmes implemented for Construction, improvement/ upgradation of roads & bridges, for providing connectivity with special focus on rural areas viz. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY), Bridge Programme, Central Road & Infrastructure fund (CRIF), NABARD, Road Sector, Cities & Towns (Macadamization), Languishing Projects, Pothole Free Road Programme, NHAI/NHIDCL/BRO, and other departmental works.

For the J&K administration, road connectivity is not only a key component of Rural Development by promoting access to economic and social services but generating increased agricultural incomes and productive employment opportunities is also part of their implementation strategy.

The other reforms in the direction of providing state of art connectivity to last mile villages in J&K includes implementation of J&K PWD Engineering Manual 2021, formulation of Road Maintenance Policy-2021, J&K Macadamization (execution and quality control) and DLP Enforcement Manual, SOP for regular departmental actions, introduction of online management monitoring accounting system, introduction of two-party quality control mechanism, introduction of Tameer Taraqqi and Hamari Sadak mobile Apps, etc.

The new online initiatives are also aimed at making the grievance management system more robust and responsive by covering important features like online registration of new grievances, tracking of grievances, online monitoring and real-time grievance report.

PEOPLE OF J&K HAIL NEW LAND LAWS AS MAJOR STEP TOWARDS DEVELOPMENT, PROGRESS

SRINAGAR: The new land laws are being hailed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir as a major step towards development and progress of J&K.

The historic initiative of the government will revamp agriculture and allied sectors besides ensuring holistic development of all sectors.

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

While progressive provisions of the repealed laws have been retained by including them in the modified Land Revenue Act, new provisions have been added to modernize existing laws. There are provisions for setting up of a Board of Revenue, Regional planning for regulating the use of land, alienation and conversion, land lease, consolidation and Contract Farming.

The Board of Revenue comprising senior officers will not only be the Developing Authority for preparing regional plans but can notify a scheme of consolidation of landholdings and also a scheme for restricting and regulating the fragmentation of agricultural landholdings to make agriculture viable.

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

Recently, Jammu and Kashmir government signed 39 Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the National Real Estate Development Council to boost employment and per capita income.

“The NAREDCO will train 10,000 workers in various skills of

the construction industry, electrical, plumbing, masonry, carpentry and the likes,” the Lieutenant Governor said, during the MoU signing event.

He said, “To facilitate transparent and accountable framework in the real estate sector, we have launched many portals — RERA portal, housing portal, integrated auction portal and these initiatives will help both developers and home buyers as one-stop portal for all their needs.”

Sinha said there were people who did not want Jammu and Kashmir to develop at par with other parts of India. “They want industries without giving land for it and development without investments. But we will break all walls that will come in the way of Jammu and Kashmir,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri during the real estate summit said, “a large-scale infrastructure development, denied to the people of Jammu and Kashmir earlier, is now possible”. “By combining rich natural resources with external investment and technical expertise, the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir will now have access to a higher quality of life,” he added.

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

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



Smart Cities Project to promote eco-balance, enhance quality of life, living standards in J&K



SRINAGAR: Under the Smart Cities Project, open spaces – parks, playgrounds, and recreational spaces are being preserved and developed in order to enhance the quality of life of citizens, reduce the urban heat effects in areas and generally promote eco-balance in Jammu and Srinagar cities.

Smart City Mission was launched by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) GoI by which 100 cities were to be selected for Urban renewal and retrofitting with the objective to promote cities that provide core infrastructure, give a decent quality of life to their citizens and apply smart solutions to improve services and infrastructure.

Speaking at an event recently, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha asked the Jammu and Srinagar Municipal Corporations to develop Smart Cities as Climate-Smart Cities and run a year-long campaign “City with Nature” with public participation to prevent water, air and plastic pollution. He further advised all the government departments to achieve the goals of bringing an end to the use of single-use plastic, and strengthening of Waste Management System.

The Smart Cities project will enable some flexibility in land use and building bye-laws to adapt to change. It will help to develop walkable localities –reduce congestion, air pollution and resource depletion, boost local economy, promote interactions and ensure security. Under the mission, the road network is created or refurbished not only for vehicles and public transport, but also for pedestrians and cyclists, and necessary administrative services are offered within walking or cycling distance.

Working on the mission, the idea of Jammu Smart City Proj-

ect and the objective of the Special Purpose Vehicle, Jammu Smart City Limited, is to transform the city into a city “of the people, for the people and by the people”; a city, people take pride in calling their own; a city people own and take responsibility of; a city which is an epitome of good, sustainable and healthy living and a city where “happiness quotient” is high.

In Jammu city, under the Smart City mission, a cumulative capacity of 12.28MW Grid-connected solar rooftop plants will be installed on government buildings at a Project Cost of Rs 53.10 Cr and the Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) would be the executing agency for the project. This will significantly help in improving the public service delivery mechanism.

Similarly, under Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL); Special Purpose Vehicle created under Smart City Mission envisions transforming Srinagar into an eco-friendly, resilient and socio-economically vibrant city that celebrates its natural and cultural heritage creating harmony and opportunities for all. SRINAGAR SMART CITY aspires to leverage its Natural & Cultural heritage/ tourism, through innovative and inclusive solutions, enhance the quality of life for its citizens.

Remarkably, under the project, the comprehensive development would be witnessed in Smart Cities under the national project. It will promote mixed land use in area-based developments–planning for ‘unplanned areas’ containing a range of compatible activities and land uses close to one another, in order to make land use more efficient.

Around 4.5 lakh persons get treatment under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY SEHAT scheme in J&K

Rs 307 crores paid to empanelled hospitals till date

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Government has treated more than 4.5 lakh people across the UT for various ailments under the Ayushman Bharat- PMJAY SEHAT scheme and paid Rs 307 crore to the empanelled health institutions under the scheme.

Under this scheme, J&K Government has empanelled around 250 hospitals including private run health institutes to provide free treatment to the beneficiaries under the scheme.

As per the statistics, 68.18 percent (69.85 lakh) of the beneficiaries have been registered under the scheme; making 76.59 percent of the total families eligible for benefits under the SEHAT scheme.

An official said that of the 69.85 lakh registered beneficiaries, 37.7 lakh people have been issued golden cards in Kashmir and 32.09 lakh in Jammu.

Government has employed all its re-

sources at district level to register all population under the scheme for maximum benefit to the people who have struggled all the years to get treatment which was unaffordable to majority of them.

The Government has directed for 100 percent coverage of the scheme this year. Mass awareness campaigns have been launched by the administration through various mediums including TV, radio and print, as well as social media to aware maximum people about this scheme and improve overall health scenario of the UT.

State Health Agency Jammu and Kashmir(SHA-J&K) has initiated a door-to-door campaign to achieve the 100 percent target under the scheme. The administration has established facilities at various places to issue golden cards. Various departments have drawn a strategy to reach out to drivers, vendors, orphanages, and mandis and register them under the

scheme. A special walk-in drive was also organised for shikara owners and their families.

The Government of India has selected the Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura as a starting point for the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission Project (ABDM) in J&K, the rollout of which was approved by the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

Pertinently, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PM-JAY) SEHAT scheme was launched in the year 2020 with an aim to extend health insurance coverage to all residents of Jammu and Kashmir UT.

It provides free of cost insurance cover to all the residents of the UT of J&K and also provides financial cover up to Rs.5 Lakh per family on a floater basis to all residents of the UT of J&K.

With GI tag, Kashmiri Saffron gains more prominence in domestic, export markets

SRINAGAR: To give a boost to saffron production in Kashmir, J&K Government has launched new initiatives including the introduction of GI Tagging.

GI sign is used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.

Saffron growers are hopeful that they will now get a better price for their produce after the introduction of GI tag to the saffron grown here. Kashmiri Saffron is grown at an altitude of 1,600 m to 1,800 m above mean sea level, which adds to its uniqueness and differentiates it from other saffron varieties available across the world.

Saffron is cultivated and harvested in the Karewas (highlands) of Jammu and Kashmir and has been assigned Geographical Indication (GI) tag by the Geographical Indications Registry. The spice is grown in Pulwama, Budgam, Kishtwar and Srinagar regions of Jammu & Kashmir.

Iran is the largest producer of saffron in the world and India is a close competitor. However, with the GI tag of Kashmir saffron, India becomes the only Saffron producing Country for which GI has been assigned which will result in more prominence in the export market thereby boosting exports as well as help the farmers to get best remunerative price for economic sustainability.

The GI Certification would also cease the prevalent adulteration of Saffron and will put an end to the marketing of Saffron cultivated in other countries under the garb of being produced in Kashmir which otherwise was defeating the economic interests of the farmers associated with this crop.

Highlighting the importance of preserving the unique identity of Kashmiri Saffron, an official of Agriculture Department said that Kashmir is having a distinction of producing one of the best saffron in the world, therefore it is our individual/collective and moral responsibility to preserve this golden spice not only for a large number of families directly associated with the cultivation of saffron but for our generations to come.

Saffron, despite its price, is in high demand for its antioxidant

properties. It carries a hefty price tag also because the process of converting crocus flowers into the thread-like spice is painstaking and labour-intensive as it takes around 160,000 flowers to yield a kilogram of saffron.

Kashmiri saffron is of superior quality because of the higher concentration of crocin, a carotenoid pigment that gives saffron its colour and medicinal value. Its crocin content is 8.72% compared to the Iranian variant's 6.82%, giving it a darker colour and enhanced medicinal value.

Kashmiri Saffron is renowned globally as a spice. It rejuvenates health and is used in cosmetics and for medicinal purposes. It has been associated with traditional Kashmiri cuisine and represents the rich cultural heritage of the region. The unique characteristics of Kashmir saffron are its longer and thicker stigmas, natural deep-red colour, high aroma, bitter flavour, chemical-free processing, and high quantity of crocin (colouring strength), safranal (flavour) and picrocrocin (bitterness).

Remarkably, a new saffron park has been started just for the sole purpose of processing and promoting the sale of saffron from Kashmir Valley. The samples brought by growers are tested here. The lab is recognised across the world. There are 8 parameters that are tested, which are internationally recognized. The 8 parameters include moisture, extraneous matter and foreign matter, and total ash and three main characteristics. They are graded and then e-auctioned. The farmers get the flowers and then the stigma separation and vacuum drying is done at the Dusoo Park.

Traditionally the farmers used to dry the saffron under shade at home but due to that, the saffron used to lose the main components. Now all the parameters are saved to get the best grade, an official of the Saffron Park said.

With the GI tag, saffron growers and traders are getting more benefits like legal protection to the products as well as prevention of unauthorized use of GI tag products by others.

'Har Gaon Hariyali' initiative ensuring sustainable dev, climate justice promotion



SRINAGAR: 'Har Gaon Hariyali' program, a unique initiative launched by the government of Jammu and Kashmir, in consonance with the vision of 'Green Jammu and Kashmir' drive has proved instrumental towards ensuring sustainable development besides promoting climate justice across the Union Territory.

The ambitious program is also contributing tremendously towards increasing the carbon stock especially in villages located near degraded forests of J&K.

The Green Jammu and Kashmir drive itself is in commensurate with the National Forest Policy 1988 and the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Policy 2011 which envisages afforestation on all degraded and denuded lands in the union territory within and outside forests.

In the words of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, the 'Green Jammu and Kashmir' campaign aims at creating people's movement at a massive scale with involvement of all stakeholders particularly village panchayats, women, students, Urban Local bodies, NGOs and civil society.

"Our aim is to bring two third geographical area of Jammu and Kashmir under the forest and tree cover. The forest and tree cover in Jammu and Kashmir is about 55 percent, which is substantially higher than the national average of 24.56 percent," Lieutenant Governor maintained.

Significantly, 1.35 crore plantations have been targeted for the year 2022-23, of which, 26.50 lakh saplings will be planted with active involvement of Village Panchayat Plantation Committees (VPPCs) to create green assets in the Gram Panchayats.

To ensure widespread people's participation in government-sponsored plantation drives, the government is adopting a multi-disciplinary convergence model linking school-level eco clubs, Village Panchayat Plantation Committees and MGNREGA works to various plantation and protection drives.

The biggest achievement under Har Gaon Hariyali is that a massive convergence programme is taking place by dovetailing funds under MG-NREGA and the afforestation programme of the forest department.

Under low-cost mode of greening and increasing the forest and tree cover, more than 50 lakh seeds/grass-slips are likely to be planted during the year 2022-23.

Notably, NITI Aayog in its 'State Energy and Climate Index' report has revealed that Jammu and Kashmir has 94.5 tonnes of carbon stock per hectare of forest land while Andaman and Nicobar tops the list with 96.4 tons of carbon stock per hectare.

Carbon stock refers to the amount of carbon stored in forests in the form of biomass, soil, dead-wood, and litter. An increase in green cover and carbon stock indicates a healthy trend to deal with global warming.

A recent Forest Survey of India report revealed that Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed an increase in the total forest cover in the last three years. The report said that the emission intensity of Carbon in Jammu and Kashmir forests is 98.2 tonnes per hectare.

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

Jammu and Kashmir has 20,194 sq km of forest area which is 47.80% of its geographical area with 55% forest and tree cover and 43% open forest. Besides, having the maximum number of forest types, J&K also has the highest biodiversity of herbs in the country.

Economically, the forests in Jammu and Kashmir generate 2 million mandays of employment and has a monetary value equivalent to Rs 1.93 lakh crore.

High-Density Plantation scheme vigorously transforming horticulture landscape of JK



UT admin executing multi-pronged strategy to make JK leading Horticulture region

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir administration, in its commitment to enhancing the quality and quantity of horticulture produce and doubling farmers' income, is executing a High-Density Plantation scheme with a multi-pronged strategy to make the UT a leading region in Horticulture.

“The high-density plantations are expected to make horticulture profitable through superior yields, higher yields per hectare, early harvest, and introduction of insect and pest-resistant varieties thereby saving the expenditure on disease and pest control,” said an official.

In a bid to boost horticulture in Kashmir valley, the administration is bringing in new scientific techniques and methods for the farmers to help them produce world-class fruits. High-density apple orchards are the latest buzz among the apple growers with many farmers growing various high-density apple varieties in recent years. The popular varieties included Gala Red, Schinco Red, Jeromie, Red Chief, Red Velox and Scarlet which have mostly been imported from Italy.

The UT administration is trying to get more growers inclined towards the high-density plantation and have also encouraged many private players to help fruit growers to set up such orchards across Kashmir.

Various steps are afoot for ensuring that horticulture and related activities get a fillip by way of various government schemes and interventions so that the quantum of produce gets increased contributing to the economy of Jammu and Kashmir. The Horticulture department ensures that the high-density plantation scheme meant to boost apple and other approved fruits production is implemented in a manner that maximum horticulturists get its benefit. A mechanism has been formulated to make it broad based by actively involving stakeholders and incorporating their views and suggestions as well.

In this regard, Elite clonal rootstocks have been brought from the Netherlands to achieve self-sufficiency in plant production so that dependence on imports is minimized, an official said.

To reduce the input cost of High-Density Plantation by way of reduction in import of planting material and to encourage local entrepreneurship in the field, the government approved imple-

mentation of Development of High-Density Plantation Nurseries in J&K through Private Entrepreneurs as a regular Scheme under CAPEX budget.

The features of the scheme reads, “Assistance to the tune of 50 per cent of the cost of planting material will be given directly to the farmers through DBT mode. The per plant cost of identified variety is fixed by a Price Determination Committee having members drawn from National Horticulture Board (NHB), Central Institute of Temperate Horticulture (CITH), Department of Horticulture and experts from Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST). Director Horticulture, Kashmir is Convener of the Committee.” The 50 per cent assistance to be provided directly to the growers through DBT will be calculated on the basis of prices fixed by Price Determination Committee on actual costs irrespective of transaction costs between the Nursery growers and the farmers, it also reads.

An online portal inclusive of Monitoring Information System (MIS) has been put in place for registration of both eligible nursery growers and farmers for smooth implementation of the scheme. All the details including demand of identified plants from farmers and availability with nursery growers are uploaded on portal.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, recently expressed gratitude to Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and the Union Agriculture Minister for announcing availability of credit for the High-Density Plantation scheme under the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund.

Spelling out the key features and support being extended to the farmers under the new intervention, LG said that this step will be a huge booster for achieving the target of 5500 Ha of High-Density Plantation and change the horticulture landscape of JK.

This will also become the launching pad for export of our horticulture produce and will increase the income of farmers of J&K manifold besides making our farmers market leader in the domestic circuit of the sector, he added. The 50 per cent capital support up to Rs 22.15 lakh is being provided by JK administration under High-Density Plantation Scheme.

The government-supported high-density apples prove to be more beneficial for farmers and give returns in the first year of planting itself.

Meanwhile, provision for coverage of 400 hectare under high-density apple plantation and 1000 hectares under sub-tropical fruit plants has also been made in the budget.

Notably, a delegation of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) extensively toured various areas of the Valley. The team visited Centre of Excellence Zawoora and held detailed deliberations about the fruit crops being grown there.



'AZAN' initiative ensuring enhanced, modernized land records management

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir government has embarked on an unprecedented development trajectory with the launch of several transformational initiatives in all sectors in the Union Territory.

The launch of an ambitious scheme “Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani” (AZAN) by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, was one such landmark achievement of the UT administration to extend the modern management system of land records besides enhancing transparency in the system.

The AZAN initiative is successfully fulfilling its objective of ensuring a transparent, enhanced and modernized land records management system to J&K people who can now access their land records online without any hardship.

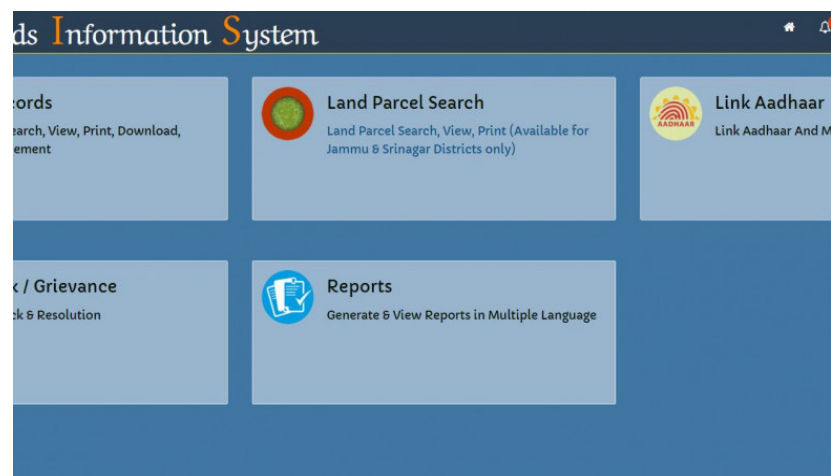
“Earlier, I had to wander from pillar to post to obtain even a single copy of my land records which was a quite cumbersome and hard task but with launch of AZAN now I can check any of my land records even while sitting at my home. Earlier, there was no such mechanism available for citizens to view or monitor the status of our revenue records online, he said while lauding the step as historic. I also extend my gratitude to J&K government for initiating the process of issuing trilingual land passbooks as a measure to fill the information vacuum and promote people’s ease of access to revenue records in Jammu and Srinagar districts,” extolled Jehangir Ahmed of Bachpora.

AZAN: Land Records Information System was launched on October 22, 2021 by the LG under which the public users can now search and view copies of the Scanned data online on CIS Portal-<http://landrecords.jk.gov.in/>. In the words of LG, the initiative will facilitate easy online access to the Land Records System, thereby reducing manipulation of the Land Records and improving the efficiency of Revenue offices substantially.

This initiative is a part of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) which was formally launched in the UT in April-2016.

The first-of-its-kind land passbook is being issued to legal owners of land in Jammu and Kashmir in Urdu, English, and Hindi languages. As a reform to further boost transparency in public dealings of the Revenue Department, a mechanism of issuing revenue passbooks to the people containing information on all their legal land possessions has been evolved and a deadline of 15th August 2022 has been set by the government for completion of the process.

As part of ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’, various Information Education and Communication (IEC) activities to sensitize the



common masses about “Apni Zameen Apni Nigrani” Land Record Information System (LRIS) are in full swing across J&K.

During the IEC activities, hands-on-training is being given to women Self Help Group members regarding use of mobile phones to view land records on mobiles. The officers create a network of trainers at Panchayat level to further help people to access their land records.

“Land Records Information System” (LRIS) is web based multi-tiered, scalable, reliable, and secure network enterprise application. The LRIS is Integrated, Geographical Information System (GIS) based decision support system to cater 24/7 services to JakLRMA agency user, state public user, special agency external user for analysis, evaluation and information of revenue records and its ancillary details like Records of Rights, Jamabandi, Girdawari, Mutation and many more.

As per NLRMP guideline, the department of Revenue and Financial Commissioner Revenue, have created a Project Management Unit in the UT to address the land records Modernization programme and subsequent management of records. The PMU has been registered as a Society and named as Jammu & Kashmir Land Records Management Agency (JaKLaRMA). The administrative and functional structure of the society is very comprehensive with inclusion of all covering departments, agencies and office within the UT. The Society is chaired by the Chief Secretary with Financial Commissioner Revenue as the chief executive.

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



JAKEDA to install 200 MW Grid Tied Rooftop Solar Power Plants on 50,000 residential buildings in Jammu city

Srinagar: The Administrative Council (AC), which met here under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, approved the installation of 200 MW of grid-tied rooftop solar power plants under the “Solar City Mission” in Jammu, an official press release informed.

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

The decision has been taken to implement the Government of India’s Grid-connected Rooftop Solar Scheme, Phase-II for the residential sector in Jammu and Kashmir to ensure that the electricity needs of the city are fully met from solar energy, the press release said.

It said under the project, 200 MW grid-tied rooftop solar power plants will be installed on 50,000 residential buildings in Jammu city by the Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) under its “Solar City Mission” at an estimated cost of Rs 1040 crore. The project will be completed by March 2024 and will have a lifetime of 25 years.

The Rooftop Solar Programme will provide subsidized installation of solar power panels on residential houses at the cost of Rs. 58,739, Rs. 53,995, Rs. 52,594, and Rs. 51,309 for Category-A (Up to 1 kW), Category-B (> 1 kW to 2 kW), Category-C (> 2kW up to 3 kW), and Category-D (> 3 kW up to 10 kW), respectively.

The Central Sector Scheme provides a central subsidy component of 40 percent of the project cost and a state subsidy component of 25 percent of the project cost for the installation of solar power panels, below 3 kW capacity, beyond which the central subsidy component remains at 20 percent. The subsidy will be provided to the beneficiaries through the DBT mode.

These rooftop solar power plants will be connected to the grid on a net metering basis. The investments made by the beneficiaries will be recovered at a rate of 25 percent annually on account of the saving of energy, with a payback period of approximately four years.

With the implementation of the project, J&K will benefit from the generation of approximately 280 million units of energy annually, with a corresponding reduction in carbon emissions of approximately 5.44 million tons, besides reaping gains from savings on account of inter-state transmission losses to the tune of 224 million units, the press release informed.

The generation of solar energy through the Rooftop Solar Programme will also help the energy-deficit UT of J&K in supplementing its energy needs, while assisting the DISCOMs in achieving the Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) Targets of 10.5 percent as fixed by the Government of India.

The project will also provide employment opportunities to local youth. Based on employment estimates, it is calculated that the 1 MW rooftop solar PV project generates a total of 40 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs over the 25 years expected lifetime of the project, which includes highly skilled personnel for business development, design, sales, procurement, and project management; one-time jobs for construction and installation of the rooftop PV system; and unskilled resources required annually for cleaning activity of the plant.

A number of additional job roles are also created by solar PV grid-connected projects in secondary and tertiary roles vis-à-vis manufacturing and supply of system equipment such as inverters, cables, trackers, and other parts. As such, around 8000 jobs will be generated through the project, the press release said.

The scheme mandates implementing agency, viz. JAKEDA to provide regular quality supervision and certification of the quality of material to be installed; periodic monitoring of physical progress and third-party quality checks from MNRE approved test centres; provide free maintenance for a period of five years post installation; install bi-directional net-meters; and ensure project completion within the given timelines.

J&K receives reward of Rs 100 cr for achieving 100% rural electrification before deadline

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir has received a reward worth Rs 100 crore from the Government of India for achieving the target of 100 per cent electrification ahead of the timeline.

Pertinently, the Union Territory had achieved another milestone under Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana 'Saubhagya' with J&K accomplishing the 100 percent target of rural electrification too before the deadline.

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, launched Saubhagya scheme on 25th September 2017 to achieve universal household electrification covering every village and every district in the country. The scheme outlay was Rs 16,320 crore including gross budgetary support of Rs 12,320 crore.

The scheme provided last mile connectivity and electricity connections to all un-electrified households in rural areas besides providing Solar Photo Voltaic (SPV) based standalone system for un-electrified households located in remote and inaccessible villages/ habitations.

The J&K Power Department Development proactively worked hard in ensuring electrification to every village which is visible from the fact that almost 3,57,405 households have been electrified in the whole of the UT.

Despite facing many natural barriers like hilly terrains and difficult topography of the region, J&K government fulfilled the dream of inhabitants living in these places to see the light of bulb. For the first time, after 73 years of independence village Saddal of Udhampur district and Ganouri-Tanta village of Doda district saw the light of an electric bulb ending decades of darkness from the lives of villagers.

Similarly, villagers in far flung and hilly border areas of Nowshera sub-division in Rajouri are experiencing a big transfor-

mation in their lives after receiving electricity under the government's Saubhagya scheme. This area was deprived of power supply from the last seven decades.

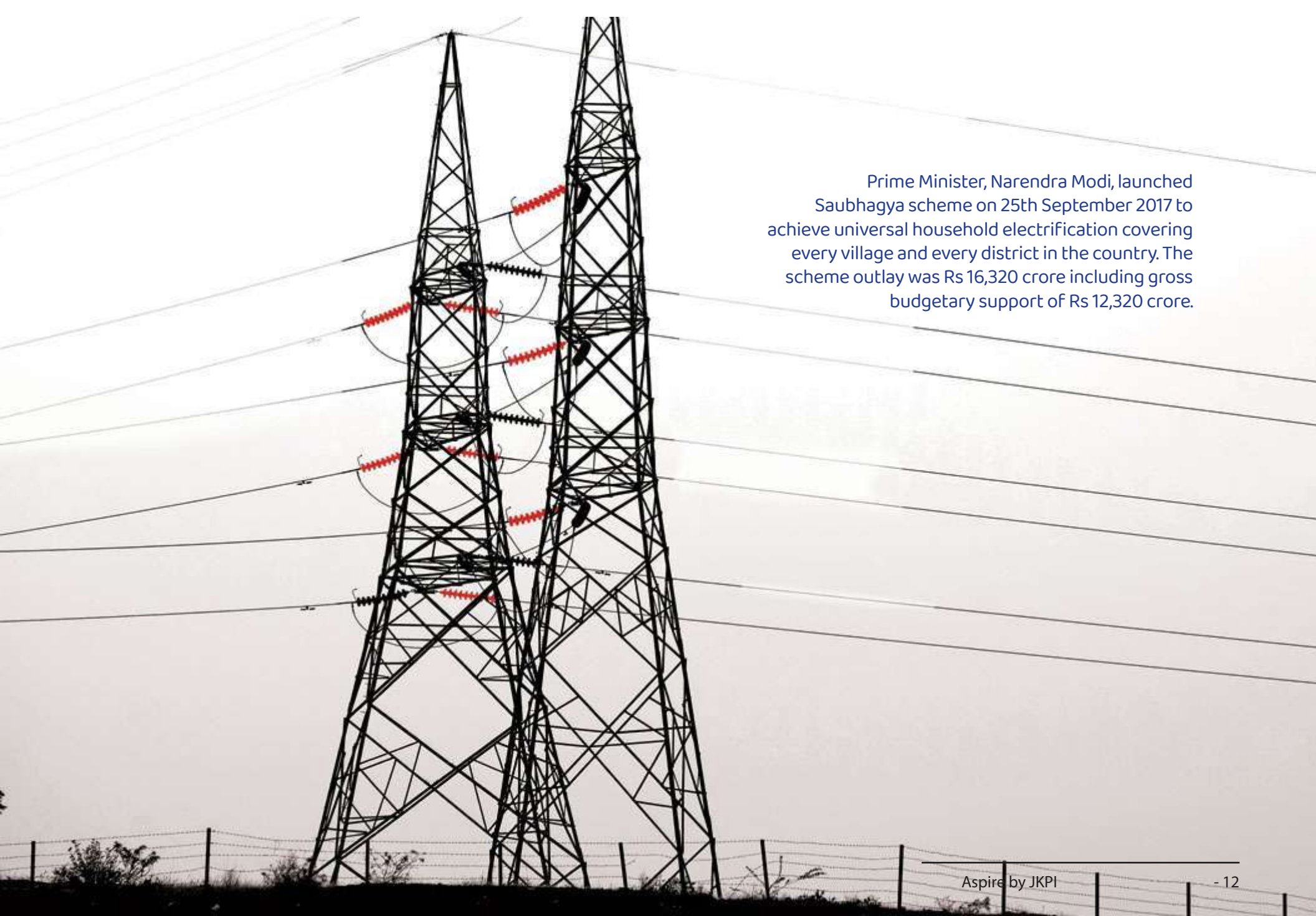
"We are grateful to the government for launching ambitious schemes like Saubhagya which has made our lives comfortable and convenient in incredible ways. Earlier, our children could not study due to lack of electricity. We had to go to another village to get our mobile phones charged," said Abdul Hamid, a resident from the area.

Under the SAUBHAGYA scheme, Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) organized camps in village or cluster of villages to facilitate on-the spot filling up of application forms including release of electricity connections to households. BRSIDES, DISCOMs/ Power Departments also adopted innovative mechanisms like dedicated web-portal and mobile app for collection and consolidation of application form in electronic mode and also capturing process of release of electricity connections.

In another significant move by the government, GARV (Grameen Vidyutikaran) App was launched which aims to monitor transparency in implementation of electrification schemes. Also, Grameen Vidyut Abhiyantas (GVAs) have been appointed by the government to report progress through GARV app.

Besides, mobile apps like 'Gram Jyoti Doot', 'Urja Vistaar' have been devised for fast track release of power connections. 'Saubhagya Rath' in all districts, is being lauded as an innovative practice by the Power Ministry.

Besides, the government has also given the concept of '4 Es' in the revised Tariff Policy which included 'Electricity for all, Efficiency to ensure affordable tariffs, Environment for a sustainable future and Ease of Doing business to attract investments and ensure financial viability.



Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, launched Saubhagya scheme on 25th September 2017 to achieve universal household electrification covering every village and every district in the country. The scheme outlay was Rs 16,320 crore including gross budgetary support of Rs 12,320 crore.

'One District one Product' initiative encouraging local producers to go global

SRINAGAR: In its endeavor to promote manufacturing and exports, Jammu and Kashmir government is vigorously working on specific interventions like enhanced marketing, technological innovations, latest designs to push "One District One Product" under PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme.

In J&K, the list of "One District One Product" under the PMFME scheme was finalized after taking into account the feedback received from various stakeholders. The approved list incorporated Jammu for dairy products; Rajouri for spices; Poonch for mutton and poultry processing; Kishtwar and Doda for walnut processing; Ramban for honey processing; Udhampur for pickles and jam; Reasi for organic vegetables; Kathua for spices and Samba for mushrooms.

For Kashmir division, the approved list incorporated Anantnag for trout fish; Pulwama for saffron; Shopian for apple; Kulgam for apple and spices; Srinagar for flowers; Budgam for exotic vegetables; Baramulla for dairy products; Kupwara for walnut; Ganderbal for honey; Bandipora for processed poultry and mutton.

Pertinently, the Jammu and Kashmir government launched centrally sponsored initiative 'One District One Product' (ODOP) under PM FME scheme, a component of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan (ABA) to boost micro food processing industrial sector in the UT. The ODOP scheme was introduced in 2020 by the Center government to boost traditionally produced perishable indigenous products with their promotion and export as well. The aim of launching this ambitious scheme was to foster balanced regional development, enable holistic socio-economic growth, boost exports and encourage investment.

This innovative initiative is generating enhanced employment opportunities besides creating an ecosystem that promotes success and encourage local producers to go global in J&K. This scheme is also complementing the existing promotional efforts of the government through Agriculture Crop Clusters, Agriculture Export Policy and National Rurban Mission in J&K.

"PMFME, being implemented with the central funding of 60 per cent and state funding of 40 per cent, is working tremendously towards strengthening unorganized micro food processing units besides promoting formalization of the sector.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, while talking about different initiatives launched by J&K administration for development of industrial sector, said that "We are enhancing people's access to financial products, promoting One District One Product, institutional credit to women, youth, SMEs, handicrafts, horticulture and various other priority sectors."

Recently, Union Minister for Food Processing Industries, Pashupati Kumar Paras, unveiled six brands including Kashmiri chilli, as part of 'One District-One Product' (ODOP) strategy under centrally sponsored scheme PMFME.

The first consignment of Kashmiri walnuts was recently flagged off from Budgam under the scheme. A truck carrying 2,000 kg of walnuts was dispatched to Bengaluru under the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative of the ministry of Commerce and Industry. There is immense potential for this product to make its place in the local and global markets.

Under the initial phase of ODOP programme, 106 products have been identified from 103 districts across 27 states and 68 products out of the 106 products are available on big e-commerce platforms.

Introduction of fiscal reforms paved way for enhanced growth, dev at grassroots level

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir government has said that introduction of a slew of major fiscal reforms has tremendously transformed the financial system in the Union territory; paving way for enhanced growth and development in the region.

One such reformative measure 'Budget Estimation and Allocation Monitoring System (BEAMS)' has empowered the J&K people to oversee works being executed in their areas on a real time basis, said a government official.

The administration has successfully implemented innovative initiatives in this regard which inter alia included BEAMS, online submission of bills through J&K PaySys, mandatory administrative approvals, technical sanctions and e-tendering, digital payments, GFR, GeM and related measures which 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 to engage with the citizens.

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.

Notably, Jammu and Kashmir government has completed over 66,000 developmental projects in the last three years.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, said that significant steps are being taken up by the government in the past three years to eliminate impediments and expedite decisions on approvals for timely implementation of projects.

In March this year, J&K Finance department accorded sanction to authorization of 100 percent Revenue and Capex budget out of Revised Estimates (RE) 2021-22 through BEAMS within the appropriation approved by the Parliament for the current financial year.

"Sanction is accorded to authorization of 100 percent Revenue and Capex budget including District Capex out of Revised Estimates 2021-22 through Budget Estimation, Allocation and Monitoring System (BEAMS) within the appropriation approved by the Parliament vide "The Jammu & Kashmir Appropriation Act, 2022 No 4 of 2022, dated March 25, 2022 for the current financial year 2021-22," read an order issued by the Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary) Finance Department.

The order stipulates the conditions for utilization of Revenue budget which specify that the Controlling Officers will ensure that all budgetary allocations are strictly as per Demand for Grants and funds shall be released through BEAMS. The controlling officers immediately release the funds to the line departments within a period of one week from the date of authorization of funds by the Finance Department.

The BEAMS administrator at the Administrative Department level will report compliance to the Finance Department on a monthly basis and the expenditure will be made strictly in accordance with GFR 2017.

In a bid to bring more transparency and accountability in the governance system, Lieutenant Governor had launched the PROOF 'Photographic Record of On-site Facility' app. It helps in uploading geo-tagged photographs while preferring bills in the concerned treasuries against the budget allotted through the BEAMS application.



228 Jan Aushadhi Kendras providing quality, affordable medicare to people at doorsteps in J&K

SRINAGAR: With the dedication of 108 Jan Aushadhi Kendras to people of Jammu and Kashmir by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, the UT now has 228 Kendras functional with high standard and quality medicines, surgical equipments and other requisite services available at affordable prices.

Such developments in the healthcare world of J&K has tremendously helped the ailing here in availing the best medicare within the UT that too in a total hassle-free and transparent manner. The people here now are completely satisfied and happy with the qualitative and quantitative improvement in healthcare utilities at their doorsteps which has also reduced their out of pocket expenditure on this account.

An official of health department said that the initiative will popularize generic medicines among the masses and dispel prevalent notion that low-priced generic medicines are of inferior quality or are less effective.

On May 9, 2011, the first store was opened at Red Cross Building Exchange Road Srinagar after Jan Aushadhi scheme was launched in the year 2010.

The Jan Aushadhi outlets known as Jan Aushadhi Kendras are becoming popular for providing generic medicines at affordable rates with quality and efficiency at par with branded medicine.

According to official data, 11 centers have been set up in Jammu, 2 in Doda, 9 in Poonch, 5 in Rajouri, 3 in Ramban, 6 in Reasi, 10 in Samba, 4 in Kathua and 2 in Udhampur districts of Jammu region.

Similarly, 8 such centers have been set up in Srinagar, 6 in Pulwama, 6 in Ganderbal, 5 in Bandipora, 10 in Kupwara, 6 in Anantnag, 1 in Shopian, 4 in Kulgam, 5 in Baramulla and 6 in Budgam districts of Kashmir region.

These Kendras have been established within the government

health care institutions in tertiary care hospitals in Jammu and Srinagar, District Hospitals, Sub District Hospitals and Primary Health-care Centres which also covered far-flung areas like Arnas, Darmi (Reasi), Sedow (Shopian) Tangdar, Kalarose and Sogam (Kupwara) to make available affordable and quality medicines available to people.

Procurement of Janaushadhi products is being executed through e-tender portal (CPPP) of Government of India while following SAP based inventory management. Besides, the administration has put in place an effective mechanism of blacklisting and debarring of vendors, suppliers and manufacturers for failure in supply and penalty for late delivery. As per quality of medicines is concerned, two tier quality assurance is being maintained by procuring medicines only from WHO-GMP certified companies and testing through laboratories accredited by NABL.

Meanwhile, the scheme is doing justice to its tagline “JANAUSHADI-SEVA BHI, ROZGAR BHI” by providing medicines to common citizens of the country at a price cheaper by 50 per cent to 90 per cent of average market price, at the same time providing self-employment with sustainable and regular earnings to unemployed youth. Also, affordable sanitary napkins are being made available in these stores to improve the menstrual hygiene management.

“The central government is contemplating to increase number of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras to 10,000 across the country by March 2024. As on October 10, 2021, the number of Janaushadhi Kendras has increased to 8,366 covering 736 districts in the country. The product basket of PMBJP comprises of 1,451 drugs and 240 surgical instruments. Medicines available under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) are priced around 50 per cent to 90 per cent less than that of branded medicines.”





Kashmir Valley witnessing exponential hike in tourist influx

TO BOOST ADVENTURE TOURISM, IN J&K, LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, MANOJ SINHA LAUNCHED J&K TOURIST VILLAGE NETWORK UNDER MISSION YOUTH. The initiative is aimed at transforming 75 villages of the UT known for historical, picturesque beauty, and cultural significance into tourist villages.

SRINAGAR, JUNE 25: Kashmir valley is witnessing an exponential increase in the tourism flow due to the successful campaigns of the J&K Government to attract maximum tourists towards the region.

According to statistics J&K tourism department, March 2022 broke the 10-year tourist arrival record in Kashmir, signalling that the tourism industry is finally on the path to recovery.

As per Union tourism ministry, around 1.42 lakh tourists visited J&K during February alone, breaking the seven-year record.

Remarkably, on April 4th this year, the Srinagar International Airport recorded busiest day ever in history, with 15,014 people travelling on 90 flights in and out of Kashmir.

Notably, for the first time, the Ministry of Civil Aviation approved the five flights a week between Srinagar-Sharjah.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had inaugurated Go First's Srinagar-Sharjah flight on October 23 last year, connecting Jammu and Kashmir with the United Arab Emirates after around 11 years.

To boost adventure tourism, in J&K, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha launched J&K Tourist Village Network under Mission Youth. The initiative is aimed at transforming 75 villages of the UT

known for historical, picturesque beauty, and cultural significance into tourist villages.

Speaking on the occasion, Sinha said that the youth-led sustainable tourism initiative will strengthen rural economy & community entrepreneurship, empowering youth & women by providing direct & indirect employment opportunities.

Highlighting the objective behind the initiative, he observed that the UT Government is adopting best practices recognizing the uniqueness of each village and showcasing the landscapes, indigenous knowledge systems, cultural diversity & heritage, local values & traditions, besides encouraging film shooting and offering financial incentives as well as ensuring a digital platform to all these villages.

J&K administration is giving special focus on the tourism sector, and the region has started witnessing significant growth in terms of increased number of tourists and creation of tourism-related infrastructure.

A dedicated focus is also being laid on bringing unexplored religious places of Jammu on the religious tourist map to attract more tourists.

New Industrial Policy addresses entrepreneurship aspirations of J&K youth

UT TO HOST GLOBAL INVESTORS' SUMMIT TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, ACCELERATE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

SRINAGAR: The government of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday that it is providing an enabling environment for investors to start their business ventures in the Union Territory.

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

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

As per the official figures, the New Industrial Policy is also expected to create 4.5 lakh jobs in J&K. The new policy has a spending outlay of Rs 28,400 crore (Rs 284 billion), the largest incentive to date, for industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir for the next 15 years. "It is expected to generate an investment of Rs 20,000 crore (Rs 200 billion) and employment of 4.5 lakh over the plan period," said an official.

The UT administration is building an eco-system through Industrial Policy and other entrepreneurship-related initiatives for nurturing innovation and startups in J&K. The creation of Industry Innovation clusters has encouraged a new generation of entrepreneurs to lead from the front and create jobs for others.

After years of not up to the mark of performance in industrialization, Jammu and Kashmir is at a new stage in its development trajectory. Focused attention is being given to growth of dynamic sectors including real estate, horticulture and tourism so as to create increased employment opportunities

J&K administration has taken numerous steps to create infrastructure, schemes and policies to speed up economic development and to meet aspirations of youth so that they can contribute to soci-



ety and achieve self-growth.

As the industries are being set up in J&K under the New Industrial Scheme, special focus is being given on training of local youth to fulfill the needs of skilled workforce. A survey and a database of all the people who are to be connected with job opportunities is being prepared, an official said.

J&K government's new resolution to equip its youths with entrepreneurship skills and building a database of 5 lakh youth has earned praises from PHDCCI-J&K. PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Kashmir Chapter (PHDCCI), Chairman, Baldev Singh Raina, has applauded the UT administration for adopting the youth-centric policies.

Notably, Jammu and Kashmir would soon host Global Investors' Summit with an objective to bring together investors, decision-makers, senior government officials and local business community for a dialogue on concrete investment opportunities in the UT.

"It will be replete with Strategic Sectoral sessions, Round Table Deliberations, one-to-one Business to Business (B2B) and Business to Government (B2G) meetings. The main objective behind the summit is to increase employment opportunities by accelerating the industrial growth in the newly carved UT," an official said.

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

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

J&K bags 'Star of Governance-SKOCH Award in Horticulture'

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir has been awarded 'Star of Governance-SKOCH Award in Horticulture' in the SKOCH State of Governance Report 2021.

The UT was awarded at an event held at New Delhi as a part of 'India Governance Forum,' an official spokesman said.

He said that J&K has topped in the Horticulture category nationally in the 'SKOCH State of Governance Report 2021'.

Secretary in Agriculture Production Department, Mohammad Akbar Wani received the award on behalf of Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, J&K Government, said the spokesman.

The award was presented by Sameer Kochhar, Chairman, SKOCH Group. SKOCH Award, independently instituted in 2003, is India's honest civilian honour conferred by an independent organisation as a third-party assessment.

It is the only award in the country that is based on felt-needs assessment and outcome evaluation based on evidence. It, therefore, recognises people, projects and institutions that go the extra mile to make India a better nation, said the spokesman.

Pertinent to mention, that the Horticulture is a major sector of the UT of J&K and plays a key role in the in the economy of the UT and has got the potential to

transform the economy of the UT.

Eight Lakh families are associated with the industry and contribute about 10% of the UTGDP.

The sector has witnessed tremendous growth in the recent years. The award was conferred particularly for advancement in High-Density apple plantation and walnut cultivation.

"Heartiest congratulations to J&K Agriculture Production Department for 'Star of Governance-SKOCH Award in Horticulture'. Horticulture is the backbone of J&K's economy and many innovative measures have been taken aiming at growth of this most significant sector," LG, Manoj Sinha.



J&K ranks top among UT category in food safety index 2021-22

NEW DELHI: In a significant achievement, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir has maintained its first rank among the UT category in Food Safety Index 2021-22 conferred by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to the states/UTs.

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Man-sukh Mandaviya presented the award to Commissioner, Food and Drugs Administration, Shakeel-Ur-Rehman in presence of Union Health Secretary and Chairperson, FSSAI, Rajesh Bhushan.

Pertinently, the Index is a dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model that provides an objective framework for evaluating food safety across all states and UTs. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India began the State Food Safety Index evaluation process for 2021-2022 by undertaking correspondence with Food Safety Commissioners of all UTs and states and setting a deadline of May 10, 2022 to furnish the data for statistical evaluation. The critical indicators are Human Resource, Compliance Levels, Food Testing Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training and Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment. The award has been conferred after examining the necessary facts sought from Food Authorities.

The initiatives of J&K department towards implementing Eat Right Campus have been acknowledged at the apex level with appreciation. The enforcement staff of UT certified 143 Food Business Operators including restaurants, hotels, bakery shops and others under Hygiene Rating Scheme initiated by FSSAI by engaging independent auditors duly approved by the said Authority. Besides, 02 Eat Right Campus, 03 BHOG (Blissful Hygienic Offering to God) were among the Institutions which were covered during the said initiative.

In order to sensitize the Food Business Operators, 87 training programs were organized under FoSTaC. About 21,000 Education Institutions were brought under the ambit of Eat Right School Initiative to inculcate the concept of



Food Safety among future generations. Besides, 1250 teachers and students have been certified as Health and Wellness Coordinators by FSSAI to help spread the message among students regarding importance and relevance of Eat Right, Eat Healthy and Sustainable Food towards building a healthy nation. In order to promote the concept of Food Fortification, 127 awareness cum educative workshops were organized at District Head Quarters across the UT with active support and participation from FSSAI.

Commissioner has attributed the award to selfless and committed efforts put in by the functionaries of the department who have been empowered to perform statutory duties under FSS Act, 2006 Rules and Regulations 2011, in the UT. He also acknowledge the overwhelming support provided by J&K government and FSSAI in terms of capacity building by providing sufficient financial assistance to the department for supporting the cause to ensure food safety and healthy food practices.

Executive Director, Rajeev Kumar Jain and other dignitaries from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, senior officials from the State Food Safety departments and Municipal Corporations/Smart City Offices, professionals in food and nutrition, development agencies, food businesses and other stakeholders were also present at the event.



Jal Shakti Dept working tirelessly to ensure piped water in every rural household of JK

SRINAGAR: Despite adverse weather conditions and challenges of transportation in many areas in difficult terrain, J&K Jal Shakti Department is ensuring piped water to every household in rural areas to accomplish its target of Har Ghar Jal.

The department has provided tap water connection to every household of more than 1000 villages in Jammu and Kashmir under the government's flagship programme Jal Jeevan Mission. Besides, 100 percent FHTCs have been provided in Ganderbal and Srinagar in the first phase which included 11 blocks, 383 panchayats and 925 villages.

The department aims to provide tap water connections in the entire UT by the end of 2022, two year before the target.

Under this ambitious project of Jal Jeevan Mission, Palli village of Samba, from where Prime Minister addressed the nation on National Panchayati Raj Day, has been fully saturated with 448 FHTCs at a cost of Rs. 143.40 lakh. The Palli village water supply project also included a tube well of 6000 gallons of discharge capacity per hour.

Randhir Sharma, Sarpanch of Palli Panchayat expressed gratitude to PM Narendra Modi for providing piped water connection to every household in his village.

"We are very happy that we got running water taps for the first time after independence. Earlier, it was a hard task to get water from hand pumps which were a source of various water-borne diseases," Sharma said.

Similarly, Farooq Sofi, resident of Dooniwari Budgam, is grateful to present government for starting work on OHT under JJM which will provide regular tap water supply in their homes.

Assistant Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Department, Tabish Qureshi, says active participation, support of people and PRIs of Fakir Gujri helped in realisation of Har Ghar Jal in this hilly hamlet. Fakir Gujri hamlet is part of Srinagar district which has been fully covered under the Mission.

To ensure quality water supply, Jal Shakti Department under the aegis of Jal Jeevan Mission has also setup 97 water testing laboratories across J&K.

Jal Jeevan Mission not only ensures regular tap water

supply but also stresses on water quality. Water testing is important for monitoring the operation of water supply, verification of the safety of drinking water, investigation of disease outbreaks, validation process and preventive measures.

Under JJM, water quality testing tools would be used for measuring the purity of drinking water, at the source, within a piped distribution system or at the end of the supply. Drinking water quality monitoring and water quality surveillance are distinct yet, closely related activities. The drinking water quality will be monitored by the supplier/ agency responsible for water quality whereas the surveillance of water quality at the grassroots will be the responsibility of the GPs/rural community.

Besides, upto 2% of total fund allocation is to be used on water quality monitoring and surveillance activities which primarily comprise water quality monitoring by the department through laboratory testing and water quality surveillance by the community through testing local water sources using Field Test Kits (FTKs). All drinking water sources are to be tested once a year for chemical contamination and twice a year for bacteriological parameters.

To empower the local community on water quality surveillance in J&K, Jal Shakti Department has embarked on a mission to identify and train 5 persons especially women in each village from the local community including ASHA workers, health workers, VWSC/ Pani Samiti members, teachers and SHG members to conduct water quality tests using FTKs/bacteriological vials at the village level, schools and Anganwadi centres.

To install 'sense of Ownership' for the Piped water supply infrastructure in the community, J&K Jal Shakti Department under the banner of Jal Jeevan Mission has embarked on a mission to constitute Paani Samiti in every village.

The role of Pani Samitis is to implement the in-village piped water and related infrastructure development.

Pertinently, a central fund of ₹2,747 crore has been allocated to Jammu and Kashmir in 2021-22 for implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission, which is nearly four times the allocation made during 2020-21.

J&K Sports Policy encourages promotion of UT's natural splendid resources

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir offers the potential to woo domestic and international travelers by organizing national, international sports tourism events like golf tournaments, rafting, snow skiing, rock climbing and motor racing.

Travelers combine their love for travelling and sports by planning their holidays around popular sports events thus boosting sports tourism in the UT.

Notably, the J&K Sports Policy encourages promotion of UTs natural splendid resources such as lakes, rivers, springs, canals and mountains to boost sports tourism. The policy accords special focus on golf, winter sports, adventure and water sports activities besides creation of hubs and sports tourist centers which would in turn provide additional job opportunities.

As per the policy document, the 'Public Private Partnership' (PPP) along with foreign mission support for knowledge and technology transfer will help take sports and adventure tourism to the higher level. Accordingly, sports tourism and specialized snow adventure sports training courses at certificate/ diploma level will become the new modus for making such sports tourism models to become self sustaining. The department of Youth Services & Sports encourage PPP mode to promote winter sports and adventure tourism.

The existing skiing facilities for training as well as leisure games at Gulmarg are being developed at par with international standards. Apart from this, specific focus for skiing infrastructure development is a thrust initiative at Pahalgam and Sonamarg as these are also a high snowfall receiving regions. Regions like Gurez and other smaller villages with several scenic spots can be developed as nature walk, trails, rock climbing with single focused sport activity. This will enable creation of experience destinations and boost the economy alongside providing employment opportunities. Besides, up-gradation of training facility and curriculum in mountaineering related courses is being done using upgraded techniques, infrastructure and methodology.

JK Sports Council in collaboration with tourism department encourages international golf competitions so that golf tourism is given a spurt. Other districts in the UT are being explored for developing golf as a sport. The Directorate of YSS in collaboration with the Golf Development Authority and tourism department is working to involve school children as well.

The aim of Jammu & Kashmir Sports Policy 2022 is 'to create a dynamic, inclusive, competitive and innovative environment that enables and empowers the citizens of Jammu & Kashmir to experience and benefit from a strong sports culture. Besides, it will facilitate creation of a self-sustaining and participative sports ecosystem that makes sports affordable, enjoyable and sustainable for all who wish to play and for those who wish to excel on global level.'

"It has been seen that Sports tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors in tourism. More and more tourists are interested in sport activities during their trips whether sports are the main objective of travel or not," said a travel consultant.

Various reports suggested that Indians are now travelling more both within and outside the country to attend their choice of sports event, thus having accelerated the sports tourism industry.

Many people use these trips as an excuse for a longer holiday, combining their sporting passions with a general love for travel, a tourism department official said. "On the other side, many in the tourism industry have also begun to realize the value of wooing these tourists, many of them fall into the high spending category, stay longer than other tourist categories, are high caliber tourists," he added.

In a significant achievement, Jammu and Kashmir is scheduled to host international level sports championships in Srinagar and Jammu soon. This will be for the first time that J&K is hosting two international sports events of which the junior Asian Pencak Silat championship will be held in Srinagar from September 1 to September 4, 2022 and international chess festival will be held at Jammu from 20th August to 28th August.



18880 beneficiaries get subsidized farm machinery in Kashmir

SRINAGAR: The government of Jammu and Kashmir has said that the farmer-centric reforms in the past two years have empowered the farmer community socially and economically by increasing their income manifold making them AatmaNirbhar.

J&K is now among the top five states and UTs in terms of farm income with a monthly income of Rs 18,918 per farmer, said a government official.

The UT government is constantly striving to provide farmers with direct access to modern technologies and credit facilities besides encouraging natural farming to improve profitability and sustainability in agriculture and allied sectors.

J&K Agriculture department has launched aggressive marketing and branding of local agri-products, mechanization in Agriculture and Horticulture sector. In this regard, High-Density Plantation, diversification, better quality seeds, capacity buildings, GI tagging, expansion of banking facilities, and micro-irrigation has achieved rich dividends for farmers and have brought a structural change in agriculture and horticulture sector.

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

The J&K government is providing 50 per cent capital support up to Rs. 22.15 lakh per hectare under a high-density plantation scheme. A common farmer used to find it difficult to arrange another 50 per cent capital due to the high-interest rate. The inclusion of HDPS under Agriculture Infrastructure Fund Scheme has made available the credit on interest subvention of 3 per cent per annum for 7 years.

The credit guarantee coverage made available under credit guarantee fund trust offers loan up to Rs. 2 crore for micro and small enterprises schemes. Besides, promotion of 'Vocal for Local' has opened up a plethora of opportunities for everyone associated with the Agriculture & allied sectors to grow and prosper.

The government is bringing National and International players on board for enhancing the knowledge expertise and providing global market linkages to J&K's farming community, an official said.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, after inaugurating the five-day-long 'Kisan Mela' at SKUAST, Jammu, asked the Agriculture Universities of J&K to work on a mission mode to connect more farmers with organic farming and horticulture and make them acquainted with the latest scientific know-how.

Bridging rural gap is among the top priorities of UT administration. In this regard, a strong framework is being de-

veloped to increase employment and connect rural youth with the agriculture and horticulture industry. The administration will extend all possible support to Youth involved in agricultural start-ups, LG asserted.

Notably, J&K government is handholding 500 enterprising farmers with knowledge-based intervention every year to harness the potential of organic produce.

The officers of the agriculture department are continuously focusing on strengthening economic relationship between farm and market to benefit the farmers and rural population. The farmers are informed and motivated about the benefits of innovation and technologies for welfare of agrarian society. The steps taken by the government will integrate rural areas into modern economic units and increased business opportunities in agro and rural industry can transform the rural economy.

Horticulture has now become backbone of economy of Jammu and Kashmir. From state-of-the-art machinery to new plants, water supply resources for farming, training, expansion of the area of high density plantation, many innovative measures have been taken in the past one year and many more are in the pipeline for future deliverables aiming at growth of the farming sector.

With special emphasis on promoting best practices in the horticulture sector, significant improvement has been registered in farm productivity and production quality due to exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Due to excellent synergy between farmers and concerned departments, J&K has become one of the top 5 performers in the country in the 'One District One Product' campaign.

Central government through its 64 schemes in the field of horticulture is providing subsidies up to 50 to 100 per cent to the farmers under different components.

With an aim to promote farm mechanization for easy and better produce, 18880 beneficiaries were provided tractors, tillers, MPS, Irrigation pumps and related agricultural tools in J&K.

Similarly, about 3666 small and mega awareness programmes were organized in J&K to create awareness about various schemes for development of Horticulture. A first buyer-seller meet was organized successfully at Srinagar to promote marketing of fruits at national and international level.

Two Centres of Excellence with a total project cost of Rs.1708.85 lakh have been sanctioned at Zawoora Srinagar and Udhaywala Jammu by GoI under MIDH scheme in the Indo-Dutch work plan. These centres will serve as demonstration and training institutes as well as source of planting material for farmers. Besides, 12000 Kanal of land has been brought under new fruit plantation.



ADVENTURE

TOURISM HOLDS

BIG PROMISE FOR

MEGA TOURIST

FOOTFALL IN J&K

Srinagar: The government of Jammu and Kashmir said that the major fillip to tourist arrival in Kashmir continues to be adventure tourism and treks with adventure sports activities like mountain biking, paragliding, hot air balloon rides, river rafting, trekking and camping are picking up in Jammu and Kashmir.

The eco-friendly adventure tourism not only provides a new option for adventure lovers to test their adrenaline rush at various adventure destinations in J&K but also helps in the well-being of the local population by providing them with new employment options.

The idea of conceiving and strengthening new Development Authorities by the government was to have systematic development of tourist locations and exploration of new destinations. The Tourism Development Authorities focus on adventure tourism and keep adventure equipment available at the tourist locations for hiring by the tourists interested in taking up exciting activities.

To provide a unique experience to tourists and increase their footfall, the J&K government has prepared a comprehensive plan for promoting the tourism sector in the UT and identifying new abundant natural beauty and breathtaking landscapes at unexplored tourist spots.

The tourism department has developed various tourist circuits across J&K, laying special focus on adventure tourism, trekking activities, pilgrimage sites, water sports and other popular ventures.

The tourism department is emphasizing the introduction of innovative measures for promotion of the tourism sector by tapping its immense potential to the fullest.

Concerted efforts are being made to promote sustainable destinations and developing unexplored places of tourism potential while branding J&K in the international tourism circuit, an official said.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, recently while launching J&K Tourist Village Network under Mission Youth, maintained that “We should never forget that every tourist destination has its own strengths and all we need to do is to focus on involving local communities, creating sustainable tourism and addressing the needs of tourists.” The initiative is aimed at transforming 75 villages of the UT known for historical, picturesque beauty, and cultural significance into tourist villages.

LG said that the youth-led sustainable tourism initiative will strengthen rural economy and community entrepreneurship, empowering youth and women by providing direct and indirect employment opportunities.

Apart from promoting Eco and Agri Tourism, Traditional Performing Art and Adventure Tourism for creating a rural tourism circuit, LG called upon all stakeholders, government departments,

PRIs, and local communities to work as a single unit for seamless implementation of the ground.

LG suggested four broader areas for promotional activities including Farm Stays, Eco-Tourism, Wildlife Tourism, and Tribal Tourism. Simultaneously, there is also a need to train the youth in public-private, community partnership models, he added.

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 villages in the forest environment through home-stays, nature guides, trek operators, food stalls, and forest souvenirs.

It is important to mention that reputed travel brand Thomas Cook (India) and its Group Company, SOTC Travel having identified strong pent-up demand for outdoor and adventure travel, have curated a distinctive portfolio, India Trekking Tours – timed perfectly with the onset of the country’s trekking season.

The company’s product range captures India’s diversity of breath-taking mountainous terrain, Sikkim’s dramatic landscapes, turquoise alpine lakes of Kashmir, arid desert topography of Ladakh, lush valleys of Himachal and Uttarakhand awash with vibrant flora-fauna, mountain springs and the source of her mighty rivers, quaint picturesque villages, temples, monasteries to the highest summit of all the Everest base camps.

The 26-year-old Bollywood actress, Sara Ali Khan, took to Instagram to share a series of pictures of herself against the most natural backdrop of mountains, clear skies and greenery, as she went out trekking. The caption read, “Kashmir Ki Kali Is back to your Gali Now trekking par Main Chali (sic)”. The Atrangi Re Actor was also spotted cooking greens at a camping site in the cold of the mountains.

Chief Secretary, Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, recently showed the green flag to heartening adventure activities of the Tourism Department that started in Srinagar from the Zabarwan hills at Harwan.

Among these adventure activities are Paragliding from Astanmarg top to Chandpora ground. The flight included a vertical drop of 2000 feet which is a hit with adventure lovers and tourists.

Dr. Mehta said that J&K has a lot of prospective in adventurous activities and it needs to be fully utilized for the overall benefit of all stakeholders, especially the weak sections of the society who are often unnoticed due to detachment.

Adventure tourism, it may be mentioned here, has been flagged by the department as an added attraction for the tourists and many new trekking routes thrown open for trekkers by the government last year were welcomed by adventure lovers.



Admin encouraging startups to foster innovation in J&K UT

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir administration is working to encourage startups and foster innovation thereby creating job opportunities in abundance besides raising economic graph of the Union Territory.

Endeavoring to accomplish this stupendous task, J&K government is focusing on sectors such as food processing, agriculture, renewable energy, handicrafts and handloom by vigorously promoting startups in these vital sectors.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, during his address to National Academia-Industrial Conclave at Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) said a strong Academic-Industry collaboration will bring a meaningful change in the private and public sector. Besides, this will provide an opportunity to promote innovation, work on new model of IEC–Innovate, Evolve and Commercialize the relevant technology, building new knowledge to meet the needs of future world, he added.

Terming startups as game changer towards economic growth, Sinha said that the government is determined to provide incubation and seed funding support to brilliant ideas and solutions.

“Our aim is to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in J&K and the synergies between industrial and academic establishments will encourage and empower young innovators and boost private investment in startups,” he added.

Divya Gandotra, hailing from Jammu, is successfully making her career as an entrepreneur at national level. She at a young age founded Scoop Beats Private Limited and Soulbeats Studio LLP. Money Control.com featured her on Children’s day under Top Young Indian CEOs. She has also been appointed as Member of Media Advisory Board at Krypto (Inventphile Ventures Private Limited) with holder of an equity share.

Divya says, “she is currently working on 12 Startup projects which included an ED Tech Startup and Few Plugin Tools.”

The startup revolution has now started in J&K, the start-ups under Aroma Mission being the best starting points under it, creating household names in India like Bharat Bhushan, the brand ambassador of Aroma Mission in India who not only doubled but quadrupled his income only in few years.

Startups ecosystem in J&K is turning youth of J&K into job providers rather than the job seekers. The ideas of young minds are heard, polished, funded and handholded by the government agencies under the guidance of Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha. The creation of industry innovation clusters by the government is encouraging youth to choose their own destiny and become role models for younger generation.

The center for Innovation and Economic Development (CIED) provides young innovators an opportunity to turn their startup ideas into reality.

Recently, Union MoS, Dr Jitendra Singh, while addressing a mammoth public rally in North India’s first Industrial Biotech Park at Ghatti, said the utility would act

as hub for incubation of new ideas and a robust platform to support the agri-entrepreneurs, startups, progressive farmers, scientists, scholars and students not only from Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh but also from nearby states of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

Dr. Singh said that the biotechnology park at Kathua has a potential to produce 25 startups in a year which will be among its great contributions to this region.

To enable the startup ecosystem and create awareness, outreach and scouting of startups, Startupjk.com has also been made live.

Startup JK is a one of its kind online platform for all stakeholders of the startup ecosystem in J&K including startups, investors, mentors, incubators, accelerators, aspiring entrepreneurs, service providers and government bodies. It not only provides an opportunity to connect with other members of the ecosystem but also gives access to important resources such as its Learning and Development program, information about relevant government schemes, a forum to brainstorm and discuss issues, news and blogs among others.

A Srinagar-based Logistics tech platform headquartered in Srinagar, FastBeetle, founded by Sheikh Saimullah and Abid Rashid recently become the first Kashmiri startup to raise \$100,000 in a pre-series, a funding round led by a clutch of angel investors including Sandeep Patel from Nepra, entrepreneurship evangelist Saurabh Mittal, Vikram Sanghvi, Rohit Qamra and a few non-resident Kashmiris. Existing investors Kartikeya Desai and Anuj Sharma also participated in the current round. The Fast Beetle has 70,000 users across Kashmir who receives food items, medicines, toys, merchandise etc through the company.

In February 2022, Jammu and Kashmir became the first UT to be integrated with the National Single Window System (NSWS) with the launch of J&K single-window portal. The NSWS is a one-stop digital platform that allows startups, companies and investors to apply for various pre-operations approvals required for commencing a business in India. It makes the business registration process easier allowing the beneficiary to get significant approvals online, without having to run to government offices.

Another startup “Gatoes” founded by Jibran Gulzar has on board 1450 startups which deliver groceries and other items to households across Kashmir making it the largest startup of Jammu and Kashmir.

Recently, JKTPO sponsored 15 startups from J&K at the India First Startup and Conclave 2022 being organized at Hotel Le Meridian by All India Council for Robotics and Automation (AICRA).

JKTPO is J&K government undertaking incorporated as a Joint Venture of Government of J&K, Indian Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO) and Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH). Among the startups were Espa Learn Private Limited and Espa Fee Private Limited. ESPA Group of Companies had three unique startups in the event including ESPA Learn Private Limited, ESPA FEE Private Limited and ESPA Lines Private Limited.

Sports Policy-2022 unifies all stakeholders to promote sports in J&K UT



Rs 19.96 Crs allocated for procuring sports equipments for school children

Srinagar: Sports Policy of J&K aims at consolidating the progress, espousing new initiatives, and making adjustments that enable the Government to promote sports with new resolve and fresh vigour thereby providing excellent opportunities to emerging and promising sportspersons, reads a communique issued by DIPR-JK.

The J&K Sports Policy-2022 intends to provide a roadmap for government departments, agencies, sports federations, educational institutions and other private sector partners and stakeholders, through which they can work efficiently, purposefully and in a coordinated manner from planning to implementation. This policy also has a provision to guide the vision that aligns and unifies efforts to develop and promote sports within the Union Territory.

The basic canons of the sports policy are to 'Scout' - identify talent and catch them young; 'Engage' - ensure grassroots inclusive engagement in sports and games; 'Facilitate' - provide sports infrastructure, facilities, know-how and training; and 'Recognize' - acknowledge the achievements and contributions through awards and further employment.

The government is creating a sports ecosystem through strategic interventions which would encompass the five levels of progression in a pyramidal structure, rising from broad base of Foundation Level to the highest point of Human Performance Index Development (HPID), with ethos of 'catch them young, train them well and keep them active till the end, for youth and 'include all' for the general populace. Identification, engagement, facilitation & recognition will form the operative principles for this pyramidal structure.

The policy has also incorporated various annual awards like award for excellence in sports for ten sports persons, J&K Khel Prot-sahana Award for Sports Association, and two veterans/experienced sportspersons/organizers or referees, Parshuram Award for 5 best coaches in different disciplines.

To motivate the UT's sporting talent, the new policy includes

announcing special cash awards to the winners in Olympics, Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, Asian Championship, World Cup Championships, Youth Olympic Games, South Asian Games, and World University Games/Championships; in the range of Rs. One lakh to Rs one crore.

The winners in all recognized national competitions and national school games in various sports disciplines will be granted specified scholarships from the Directorate of Youth Service & Sports. The new policy also focuses on encouraging the specially-abled sportspersons through sufficient infrastructure and training facilities to ensure their full participation in various events.

Meanwhile, Jammu and Kashmir is scheduled to host the international Junior Asian Pencak Silat championship in Srinagar and International Chess festival at Jammu.

This will be for the first time, J&K is scheduled to host two international sports events of which the junior Asian Pencak Silat championship will be held in Srinagar from Sep 1 to Sep 04, 2022 and international chess festival will be held at Jammu from 20 Aug to 28 August.

Notably, J&K Govt has allocated Rs 19.96 cr for procuring sports equipment for the school children as physical and sports infrastructure grants.

Moreover, J&K Sports Policy also aims to realize the goals associated with strengthening the governance, legal and administrative system for the management of sport, games & fitness related initiatives in the UT-J&K.

"The institutional mechanism of the sporting structure within the UT-J&K has to align itself with the vision and mission laid out within the policy. The sports governance system of the UT of J&K works on the four cornerstones- Transparency, Ethics, Professionalism and Accountability," said an official.

An online single window system of governance linked to the Aadhar card has been established for registration and membership of associations, specialised sports clubs, corporate houses, selection criteria, participation in events and usage of all related facilities provided by the Sports Department. To ensure that all the activities conducted are placed on record in an authentic manner, a geo-tagging/geo-location monitoring mechanism is followed.



LG LISTS ACHIEVEMENTS OF ADMIN IN PAST FEW YEARS

Srinagar: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday inaugurated the Himalayan Museum at Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering and Winter Sports in Pahalgam resort of south Kashmir.

Singh, who is on a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir to review the security preparedness, also inaugurated the Colonel K S Mall Boulder Climbing Wall, an official spokesperson said.

During his visit, the minister participated in the executive council and general body meeting of the premier mountaineering institute of the country, the spokesperson said.

Singh was accompanied by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

In his address to the 9th executive council and 4th general body meetings of the Jawahar Institute of Mountaineering and Winter Sports (JIM&WS), Sinha, according to an official press release, expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for the “revolutionary ‘AGNIPATH’ scheme which will give a new identity to the youth of the country, providing better future to them.

“This historic step will motivate the youth to serve the motherland and enhance the combat potential of our Armed Forces,” he said.

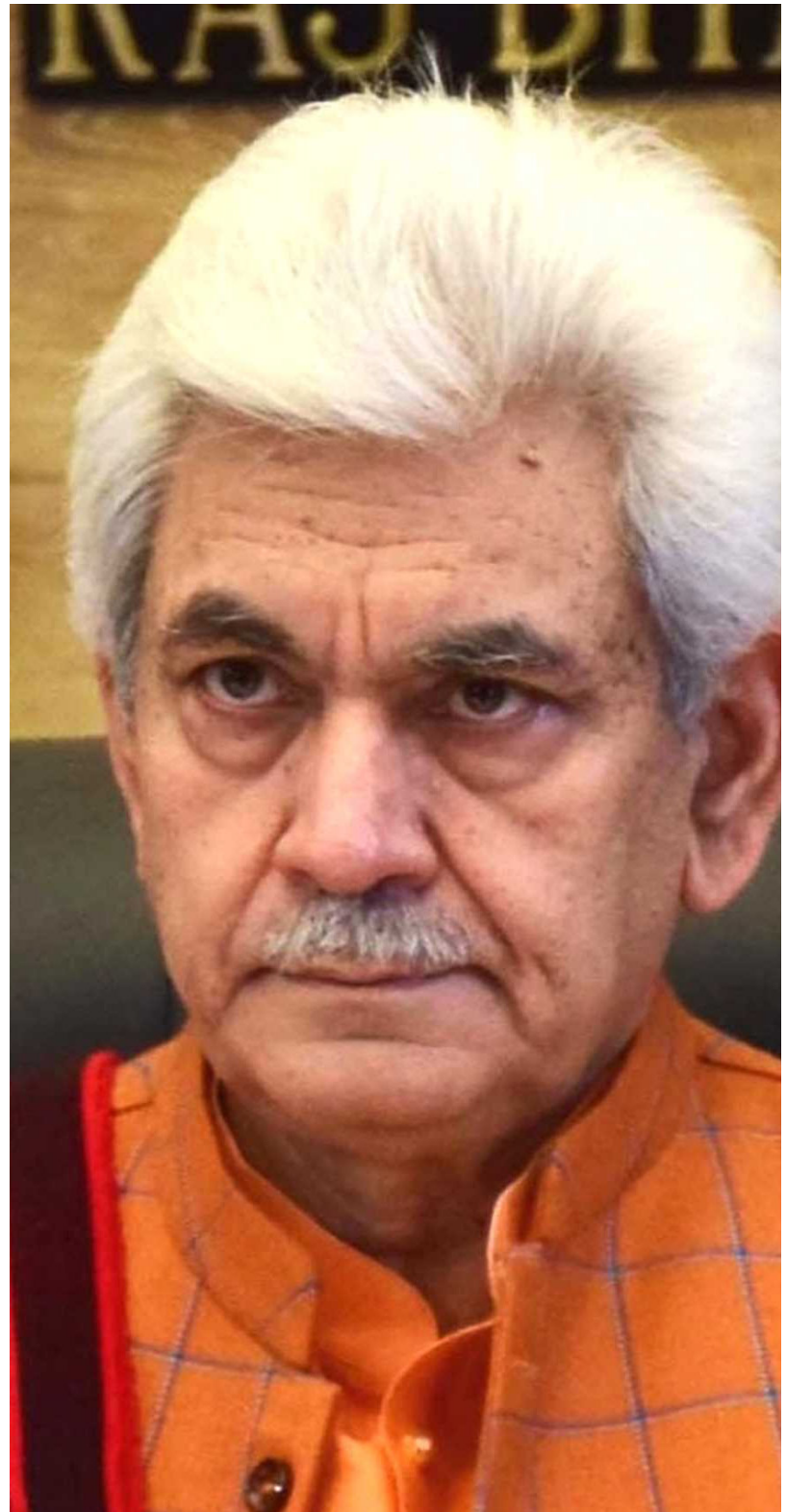
He said since its inception in 1983, the JIM&WS has overcome many difficulties and challenges to carve a niche for itself in the field of adventure sports. “Not only trainees but trainers like Mahfooz Hajam have also made this institute proud with their remarkable achievements,” he said.

He said JIM&WS is always ready to serve the people and is working shoulder to shoulder with the administration during natural calamities.

JIM&WS has also become the first institute in the country to achieve a significant accomplishment by completing winter skiing courses in Sonmarg for the local and adventure sports lovers coming from all over the country, he informed.

The institute is making relentless efforts for promotion of adventure sports & mountaineering activities in the country and showing the way to other institutions, he said.

“Climbing the highest peaks is not an ordinary adventure. It’s a journey, it’s a heroic deed and it’s a search in a mysterious mountain to attain the unattainable. I urge young enthusiasts to make protection of the ecosystem an integral part of this sport and contribute in



building a better society, a prosperous UT for future generations,” Sinha said.

“In last 2-3 years, Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing massive transformation in the field of sports. Last year more than 17.5 lakh youth got an opportunity to showcase their talent in various sports disciplines. Earlier, the participation in sports never crossed the 1 lakh mark and this year our aim is to achieve a record figure of 35 lakhs,” the LG said.

“We have improved our ranking and moved to 16th place in the Khelo India Youth Games which concluded in Haryana recently. I am sure that J&K will be in the top ten in the next edition,” he said.

“With state-of-the-art Indoor and outdoor stadiums; 31 Khelo India Centers; provision of play fields and sports kits in every panchayat and providing maximum opportunities to promising sportspersons, the UT of J&K has become a powerhouse of sporting talent and is moving towards achieving excellence in sports,” the LG said.

“J&K is marching ahead on the path of development, making socio-economic progress, and fulfilling the aspirations of the people. It is our commitment to reform every sector that affects the lives of common man,” he said.

The LG said that in 2018-19, “only 9,229 projects were completed; subsequently, in 2020-21, 21,943 projects were completed and in the FY 2021-22, we have achieved the historical milestone of completing 51,000 projects.”

He said that J&K has become one of the leading States/UTs in the healthcare sector. “We have achieved tremendous progress in road connectivity. Earlier, only six km of road was constructed daily in Jammu and Kashmir, but today we are building 20 km of road every day. Recently, J&K has been ranked third in performance under PMGSY.”

“We have introduced e-governance to make the governance process more transparent and citizen-friendly and in one year, J&K ranked at the top among the UTs and we will be number one across the country soon,” the LG said.



‘International Yoga Day-2022’ celebrations held across Kashmir

DCs lead Yoga sessions

SRINAGAR: On the eighth edition of ‘International Day of Yoga’-2022 (IDY), functions/celebrations were held across Kashmir division to mark the day and raise awareness of the many benefits of practicing yoga.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioners, other officers and officials besides youth, students and public were seen performing yoga during symbolic yoga sessions in all the districts of Kashmir.

The theme of this year’s IDY is ‘Yoga for Humanity’. Yoga has been beneficial in keeping the body and mind in sound health. A holistic approach, Yoga targets all the different systems of the body and mind. It is said that the asanas make the body strong and flexible, as health improves; the mind too is renewed with confidence.

At Baramulla, the International Yoga day was celebrated with great enthusiasm and zeal with the main function held at Indoor Sports Stadium Baramulla in which a large number of school children participated.

The function was organized by District Youth Services and Sports Baramulla with an active collaboration of Degree College Baramulla.

The function was attended by Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Dr. Syed Sehrish Asgar as the chief guest and other dignitaries of concerned departments.

At Budgam, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Shahbaz Ahmed Mirza today participated in the International Yoga Day function held at Indoor Stadium Budgam, where hundreds of youth joined the training sessions.

The function was organized jointly by Nehru Yuva Kendra Budgam and the Department of Youth Service and Sports Budgam in collaboration with the Department of Ayush and Education.

As many as 350 both male and female participants took part with great enthusiasm and zeal.

At Pulwama, the Department of Youth Services and Sports today organized the celebration of International Yoga Day at Hockey

Turf, Boys Higher Secondary School Pulwama.

The programme was attended by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Baseer Ul Haq Choudhary, SSP Awantipora, and all District Officers, public, students and employees whereas symbolic yoga demonstrations were performed at DPL, Distt Hospital, Distt Correctional Home, Quarantine Centres, Orphanage Centre and Social Welfare office.

At Shopian, the International Yoga Day was today celebrated across Shopian district with the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Sachin Kumar Vaishya presiding over the main event held at District Headquarter, Mini Secretariat Lawns.

The Yoga sessions at district level were organised by Youth Services Sports Department, Shopian in collaboration with Department of Education and Ayush, Shopian and was attended by District Officers, staff of different departments, students and locals.

At Kulgam, the International Yoga Day-2022 was celebrated across district Kulgam with the main function held at the lawns of the mini-secretariat Kulgam.

The Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Dr. Bilal Mohi Ud-Din Bhat; SSP Kulgam, Dr G.V. Sundeep Chakravarthy, officers and officials of various departments, students of various schools/institutions participated in the Yoga sessions.

At Bandipora, International Yoga Day was celebrated across Bandipora district on Tuesday as special Yoga sessions were held in all playgrounds and educational institutions.

The Department of Ayush Bandipora in collaboration with the District Administration and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) organised a grand function at Mini-Secretariat Bandipora to celebrate the International Day of Yoga.

Students, officers and officials from Ayush, District Youth Services and Sports, Forest Training School Cadets and District Yoga Asana Academy participated in the programme.

Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Dr. Owais Ahmed was the

Three heritage, iconic sites of J&K among 75 prominent sites chosen for International Yoga Day



Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself...

Central Ministers will lead Yoga Day events

SRINAGAR: Three heritages sites of Jammu and Kashmir have been chosen among 75 prominent heritage spots for special events on June 21 being celebrated as International Yoga Day.

These included Suchetgarh in RS Pura sector along International Border with Pakistan in Jammu, historic Dal lake in Srinagar and Martand Sun temple in Anantnag.

Union Minister in Prime Minister's Office (PMO) holding Independent Charge of Sciences and Technology, Earth Science, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh, will lead Yoga Day celebrations along with security personnel and local people on the International Border of Suchetgarh in RS Pura sector of Jammu district.

Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Bharti Pravin Pawar, will lead the celebrations at Martand Sun Temple in Anantnag district of South Kashmir while Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj Kapil Moreshwar Patil will join the Yoga Day function to be organised at Dal Lake, Srinagar.

Pertinently, 75 heritage and iconic sites have been finalized by the Union Government where Prime Minister Narendra Modi and 75 Union Ministers including Defence Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister will lead International Yoga Day (IYD) celebrations this year.

For the first time, all 75 Central Ministers will be visiting one historically significant spot each across the country on the

occasion of International Yoga Day.

Prime Minister will lead Yoga Day celebrations at Mysore Palace in Mysuru in Karnataka while Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will be in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) and Union Home Minister, Amit Shah at Trimbakeshwar temple at Nasik in Maharashtra.

Notably, the draft resolution for establishment of International Yoga Day was proposed by India and supported by 175 member states. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his speech at the 69th session of the General Assembly in 2014, first proposed the idea.

Calling Yoga, a priceless gift from the ancient history of India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi pushed for remembrance of yogic practices. Ultimately, on December 11, 2014, the UN declared June 21 as International Yoga Day.

In the UN General Assembly, Narendra Modi said: "Yoga is an invaluable gift of India's ancient tradition. It embodies unity of mind and body; thought and action; restraint and fulfillment; harmony between man and nature; a holistic approach to health and well-being. It is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with yourself, the world and nature. Changing our lifestyle and creating consciousness, it can help us deal with climate change. Let us work towards adopting an International Yoga Day"

The significance of the chosen date is that it is the Northern Hemisphere's longest

day, which is commemorated as a culturally significant day in various areas of the world. It is also mark start of summer.

The first Yoga Day was celebrated in 2015, with India achieving two Guinness World Records: The Record for 'the largest yoga class' and record for 'largest number of nationalities at a yoga event'.

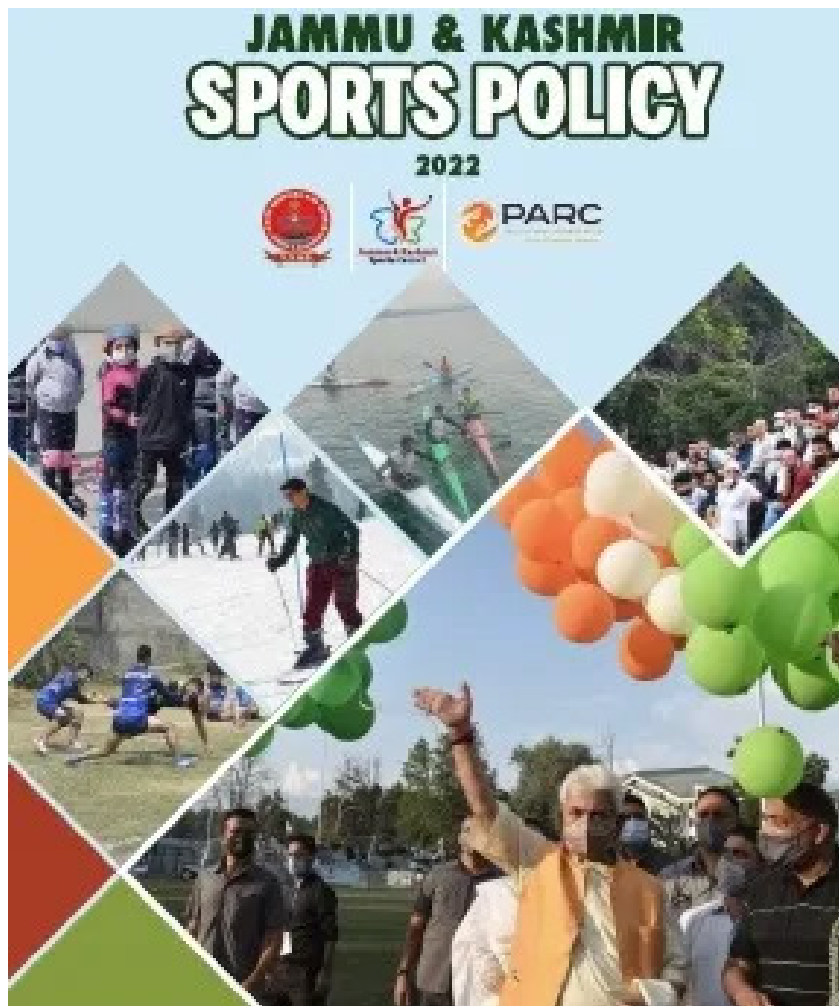
The theme for the 8th edition of the International Yoga Day is 'Yoga for Humanity'. People from all across the world celebrate the event with utmost dedication, and several competitions are held to motivate individuals to participate in the event.

United Nations (UN) describes the essence of yoga as creating balance and harmony. UN says, Yoga is, "not just about balance within the body or that between the mind and the body, but also balance in the human relationship with the world."

"Yoga emphasizes the values of mindfulness, moderation, discipline and perseverance. When applied to communities and societies, Yoga offers a path to sustainable living," the UN states further.

COVID-19 pandemic present resurgence has added stress and anxiety among the people. The disease and isolation are not only affecting the health of the patient but also affecting their emotional health and even that of his family members. Yoga helps to deal with these types of issues. It helps us to build up psycho-physiological health, and emotional harmony; and manage daily stress and its consequences.

Have developed strong sports culture in J&K, will nurture it with best training, exposure: LG



Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Wednesday inaugurated the first-ever National Rowing Championship in J&K and invited the sporting fraternity from across the country to come and enjoy warm hospitality and spectacular games here.

“After the First Chess Olympiad Torch Relay on Tuesday, this is another historic sporting moment for UT of J&K. This National Rowing Championship will provide a unique opportunity for young sportspersons from all over the country to display sporting excellence and share the camaraderie and sportsmanship,” Sinha said.

According to an official press release, the LG said that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, “India’s golden sporting era has truly begun. Hon’ble PM has fuelled the athlete’s individual aspirations with the hopes and dreams of 130 crore countrymen.”

Initiatives like Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) and Khelo India have given wings to the young generation. It has given the perfect opportunity to the players to target Olympic medals, the LG said.

Lauding the leadership of the Prime Minister for establishing a vibrant sports culture across the country, the LG said that in the last two years, the UT government has paid special attention to developing sports infrastructure and providing sports facilities to youngsters in rural areas.

“Our aim is to harness the talent, nurture it and provide the

best training and exposure,” he added.

The LG also observed that sports institutions were established in blocks, districts and divisions to channelize the unlimited energy and potential of youngsters.

“Earlier, one lakh players used to get the opportunity to play in a year. Last year the number increased to 17 lakh and this year 35 lakh players are expected to participate in different disciplines of sports across the UT,” he said.

In order to ensure equal opportunity, 50 percent participation of girls is being ensured in the talent development program. “We are treating the entire process as a movement to groom the future generation,” he added.

The LG said the Nehru Park’s Water Sports Center, inaugurated last year, is equipped with world-class infrastructure for kayaking, canoeing and rowing. He urged sportspersons to take advantage of this infrastructure with a focus on medals in the international arena.

“Every day around 400 children including girls are being imparted specialized training through this Water Sports Center. In the last three years, our players have won 100 medals in national level competitions in kayaking and canoeing and many players have also represented the country in international tournaments,” the LG added.

A water sports center like Srinagar is also being built in Basohli in Jammu division, which will be equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure and facilities.

“No one else will decide your success or failure. You are the master of your own fate. Move forward and be the leader of tomorrow,” LG told the participants.

Rajlaxmi Singh, President Rowing Federation of India while speaking on the occasion extended gratitude to LG for his support in organising the National Rowing Championships-2022 in J&K. She said the region has an immense talent pool in the field of sports with many sports persons making their mark at the international level.

Dal Lake has the potential to host international level water sports events, she added.

Motivating the participants, Singh said that rowing rewards patience, humility and hunger to succeed and asked them to give their best during the championship.

S.A. Watali, Organizing Secretary, delivered the welcome address.

On the occasion, Oath was also administered to the participants to abide by the spirit of the game.

The teams will compete in different categories in the course specially made for the championship in Dal Lake.

Dilbag Singh, DGP; SJM Gillani, ADGP Armed; Alok Kumar, Principal Secretary Youth Services and Sports; Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Vijay Kumar, IGP Kashmir; MV Sriram, Secretary General RFI; Nuzhat Gul, Secretary, J&K Sports Council; Arjuna & Dronacharya Awardees, Olympians, coaches, participants from across the country, technical officials, officers of RFI besides others were present on the occasion.



Tejaswini Scheme helping young JK women to set-up gainful self-employment ventures

SRINAGAR: Tejaswini Scheme is providing financial assistance to the young women of J&K for setting up gainful self-employment ventures, suited to their skills, training, aptitude and local conditions.

To empower and encourage women for income generation for activities either in manufacturing/service/trading/small business etc, J&K Government is facilitating soft finance for setting up new unit/enterprise or for expansion/modernization of existing Unit.

Pertinently, the scheme launched by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, in June, 2021 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 the young women of 18 to 35 years of age for setting up 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 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.

The scheme intends to provide assistance to all eligible young women who are domiciles of J&K and have a qualification of matriculation and above. It will also cater

to enterprises where women entrepreneurs hold not less than 50% of financial holding, besides providing assistance to set up women-centric businesses and micro start-ups.

In view of the low participation of women in various entrepreneurial and livelihood generation activities, Mission Youth has conceptualized this scheme for young women of J&K to uplift the status of women in society.

Mission Youth has set a target to cover 2000 women entrepreneurs under the scheme during the current financial year. A budgetary component of Rs. 12 crore has been earmarked by Mission Youth on account of government subsidy for the scheme for the current financial year. The scheme has the distinction of being the first of its kind under which repayment of financial assistance will be interest-free. It has been specifically modelled to ensure that businesses set up by these young women turn into viable and flourishing enterprises.

The Government also helps the young aspiring women entrepreneurs in acquisition of fixed assets (Plant & Machinery, equipment, furniture & fixtures) and meet the working capital needs for purchase of various products/equipments/tools etc.

The scheme is proving a significant step towards boosting employment scenario in J&K where unemployment rate is higher than the national average.

The women entrepreneurs do not have to visit any office for the purpose and the Mission Youth has come out with an online portal for end to end process of applications.



J&K: For the first time after 2014, at least 200 sportspersons will get govt jobs in coming months



SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today dedicated revamped Sher-i-Kashmir Indoor Sports Complex at Gogji Bagh, Srinagar to the sportspersons.

He also unveiled the calendar of Sports Activities 2022-23 under the “My Youth My Pride” Campaign on the occasion.

Pertinently, the Indoor Sports Complex which was badly affected during 2014 floods has been modernized with top of the line facilities for sportspersons. Its renovation was completed at a cost of Rs 14.76 crore by the J&K Sports Council under JKIDFC Languishing Projects and has facilities like Multi-activity playing area, Taekwondo hall, Basketball Court, outdoor Gymnasium, besides all other modern amenities.

Speaking on the occasion, the Lt Governor congratulated the winners and participants of the Khelo India Youth Games which recently concluded in Haryana.

“Truly inspired by the heart-warming performance of our athletes in the recently concluded Khelo India Youth Games in Haryana. J&K has improved its medal tally and now our players with a strong winner’s instinct are aiming for gold in upcoming Asian and World Championships,” the Lt Governor said.

Noting that Sports ecosystem in the UT has been made world class under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Lt Governor observed that J&K is inching closer towards achieving excellence in sports. Our promising sportspersons are being given maximum opportunities for training in India and abroad, he added.

The Lt Governor observed that the youth of Jammu and Kashmir now have access to ample opportunities based only on merit and skill with absolute transparency.

He further said that the government has ensured a secure and attractive career track for medal winners in the National as well as International Games.

Speaking on the sports policy rolled out for the overall benefit of sportspersons and securing their future, the Lt Governor said that for the first time after 2014, at least 200 sportspersons will get government jobs in coming months. Our objective is to create maximum incentives for talented sportspersons, he added.

The Lt Governor further observed that owing to enhanced availability of upgraded sports infrastructure, now notable sporting events are being organized in the UT and our talented youths are getting the opportunity to play as well as learn from the famous players.

“Senior National Archery Championship was held in Jammu in March this year and 1014 female and male players including 50 international level players participated in it. We are all set to organize 16 more national and international tournaments this year on the same grand scale. Soon, National Table Tennis Championship, Senior Volleyball Championship will be organized in this indoor stadium in which our youngsters will get a chance to show their talent and it will also be a great opportunity to learn in the presence of international players,” he added.

It was further informed that promising gymnast Bavleen Kaur from J&K will participate in the Asian Games and renowned fencers, Shreya and Vishal will represent the country at

the World Championships. Eight athletes from the UT including Aqsa Gulzar, Komal Dhiman, Suhaib Jeelani, Ravees Ahmed, Saqib, Karan Chopra, Adil Manzoor, Bilqis Maqbool will represent the country in the Pencak Silat Championship to be held in July next month.

The Lt Governor noted that under the guidance of Prime Minister, the industrial sector is witnessing massive inflow of investments and that will translate into a host of entrepreneurial and employment opportunities for our enterprising youths.

Highlighting the UT government’s consistent efforts towards empowering the youth, the Lt Governor said that more than a dozen schemes are being run under ‘Mission Youth’ to make our youth capable and future ready. At least 5 young boys and girls have become entrepreneurs in every panchayat and are fulfilling their dreams through Mumkin, Rise Together, AVSAR and Tourist Village Network programmes.

The Lt Governor congratulated noted sportspersons of Jammu and Kashmir who have brought laurels to the UT at various national and international levels in the last few months. He made a special mention of cricketer Umran Malik; Beijing Olympian, Arif Khan; Wushu Gold Medalist, Sadia Tariq; Cyclist Adil Altaf; Rakshanda Mehak; Rakesh Kumar; Chanddeep Singh and footballer Ishan Pandita.

The Lt Governor also called for collective efforts of administration and people to uproot the evil of Drugs from the society so that youngsters can channelize their energies and achieve big in life.

“On one hand the government is giving wings to dream of youth while on the other, the enemies of peace are making nefarious attempts to misguide them. I urge our young generation to dedicate themselves in shaping J&K’s future,” the Lt Governor said.

Junaid Azim Mattu, Mayor SMC, while speaking on the occasion, congratulated the sportspersons of the region for the indoor sports facility.

Nuzhat Gul, Secretary, J&K Sports Council, gave a detailed briefing about the achievements made so far, besides various initiatives being taken for promoting sports in the UT.

Sports enthusiast of Rural, Tribal, Urban and Border areas, by way of a signature campaign, expressed their gratitude to the Lt Governor led UT Government for conceptualizing and implementing “My Youth My Pride” campaign and giving opportunities to the players at grass root level to excel in sports.

Young Sportspersons demonstrated their skills and abilities in various sports disciplines, besides staging impressive March Past to mark the occasion.

Aftab Malik, DDC Chairman Srinagar; Alok Kumar, Principal Secretary Youth Services and Sports; Pandurang K Pole, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir; Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary to the Government, Tourism Department; Vijay Kumar, IGP Kashmir, Mohd Aijaz, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, besides senior officers of police and civil administration, prominent sports personalities, budding sportspersons in large numbers were present on the occasion.



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.

NITI AYOOG awards district Kupwara with Grant in Aid of Rs 3 crore

KUPWARA: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Khalid Jahangir today complimented the Lead District Manager (LDM) Kupwara and his team for excellent performance in improving the indicator of financial inclusion under Aspirational District Programme during the month of April this year.

The NITI AYOOG has conferred an award of Rs 3 crore – Untied Grant to District Kupwara for securing first rank under Financial Inclusion and Skill Development theme. The first such initial grant was awarded by NITI AYOOG to Kupwara district 3 years ago in March 2019.

The NITI AYOOG has also congratulated Deputy Commissioner Kupwara and his team for receiving the grant of additional Rs.3 crore for the excellent performance in the district.

The DC also complimented other officers and field staff of the Administration who are working tirelessly to improve their respective indicators. He said Joint Umbrella Camps, envisaged to ensure 100 percent saturation of financial inclusion indicators, are being held across the district.

He hoped that the officers and functionaries of the district will make concerted efforts to excel in other thematic areas and key performance indicators to lead overall improvement in the ranking of the district.

The DC also expressed gratitude to the UT Government for its whole hearted support to the District Administration in accomplishing the objectives/targets laid under the Aspirational District Programme.

Banks have huge role in helping double J&K's economy in next five years: CS



SRINAGAR: Under the Smart Cities Project, open spaces – parks, playgrounds, and recreational spaces are being preserved and developed in order to enhance the quality of life of citizens, reduce the urban heat effects in areas and generally promote eco-balance in Jammu and Srinagar cities.

Smart City Mission was launched by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) GoI by which 100 cities were to be selected for Urban renewal and retrofitting with the objective to promote cities that provide core infrastructure, give a decent quality of life to their citizens and apply smart solutions to improve services and infrastructure.

Speaking at an event recently, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha asked the Jammu and Srinagar Municipal Corporations to develop Smart Cities as Climate-Smart Cities and run a year-long campaign “City with Nature” with public participation to prevent water, air and plastic pollution. He further advised all the government departments to achieve the goals of bringing an end to the use of single-use plastic, and strengthening of Waste Management System.

The Smart Cities project will enable some flexibility in land use and building bye-laws to adapt to change. It will help to develop walkable localities –reduce congestion, air pollution and resource depletion, boost local economy, promote interactions and ensure security. Under the mission, the road network is created or refurbished not only for vehicles and public transport, but also for pedestrians and cyclists, and necessary administrative services are offered within walking or cycling distance.

Working on the mission, the idea of Jammu Smart City

Project and the objective of the Special Purpose Vehicle, Jammu Smart City Limited, is to transform the city into a city “of the people, for the people and by the people”; a city, people take pride in calling their own; a city people own and take responsibility of; a city which is an epitome of good, sustainable and healthy living and a city where “happiness quotient” is high.

In Jammu city, under the Smart City mission, a cumulative capacity of 12.28MW Grid-connected solar rooftop plants will be installed on government buildings at a Project Cost of Rs 53.10 Cr and the Jammu and Kashmir Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA) would be the executing agency for the project. This will significantly help in improving the public service delivery mechanism.

Similarly, under Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL); Special Purpose Vehicle created under Smart City Mission envisions transforming Srinagar into an eco-friendly, resilient and socio-economically vibrant city that celebrates its natural and cultural heritage creating harmony and opportunities for all. SRINAGAR SMART CITY aspires to leverage its Natural & Cultural heritage/ tourism, through innovative and inclusive solutions, enhance the quality of life for its citizens.

Remarkably, under the project, the comprehensive development would be witnessed in Smart Cities under the national project. It will promote mixed land use in area-based developments–planning for ‘unplanned areas’ containing a range of compatible activities and land uses close to one another, in order to make land use more efficient.

J&K Bank rolls-out Special Karz Mukti Scheme–2022

SRINAGAR: As part of its wider drive to reduce Non-Performing Assets, J&K Bank today rolled out its second One-Time Settlement (OTS) scheme.

The Bank's MD & CEO, Baldev Prakash launched the scheme titled 'JKB Special Karz Mukti Scheme – 2022' for NPAs in presence of the entire top-management at corporate Head-quarters. Bank's Divisional Heads of Jammu, Kashmir and Rest of India besides the Heads of all Zones and Clusters also joined the function through Video-Conferencing mode along with other senior officers. Complementing the concerned team for devising such scheme, MD & CEO Baldev Prakash said, "I see 'JKB Special Karz Mukti Scheme – 2022' as an attractive offer developed for the targeted borrowers. Therefore I hope all the eligible account holders would avail this golden opportunity to settle their accounts and benefit from the best possible incentives, and concessions provided under the scheme."

Emphasizing upon the need for direct and in-person communication with borrowers to make them aware about the scheme parameters, MD & CEO directed the participants to persuade every borrower in person for early resolution under the scheme while working in close coordination with each other for effective implementation of the scheme.

Earlier, General Manager (IAPMD) Syed Shujaat Hussain Andrabi gave an overview of the Bank's NPA Scenario and urged upon the participants to implement the OTS scheme which has

been devised to provide an enabling environment to the operative levels to effect recoveries.

"Under the scheme, which is non-discretionary and non-discriminatory, faster payment of OTS amount has been incentivized. For making full payment within one month from the date of sanction, the beneficiary of the scheme can avail an incentive of 5% of the amount arrived at as per the settlement formula while as those paying within two months can avail 2% of the OTS amount as incentive," he said.

A detailed presentation covering all the features of the scheme was made on the occasion. The scheme is valid for 3 months till 16th September, 2022 with maximum repayment period of six months from the date of sanction. The sanction or otherwise for the scheme will be accorded and conveyed within seven working days from the date of receipt of application. The function concluded with MD & CEO expressing hope that the operative levels will reach out to all the eligible borrowers under the scheme and make it huge success.

Notably, accounts classified as Doubtful 3 (NPA for 4 years and above) and Loss assets with outstanding amount below Rs 15 lakhs as on 31st March, 2022 are eligible for settlement, which include cases pending before Courts/DRTs besides those wherein the Bank has issued notice u/s 13(2) or taken action u/s 13(4) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act (SARFAESI-2002).

SVAMITVA scheme to formulate better Gram Panchayat Development Plans

'Srinagar becomes first district in country to achieve 100 percent property cards generation/distribution under SVAMITVA'

SRINAGAR: Survey of Villages Abadi & Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA) is designed for empowering the villagers and land owners of J&K to access the revenue records of their properties, obviating the dependence on human interface, had emerged as a great success in Jammu and Kashmir and people here are taking due benefits out of it.

SVAMITVA is a property card with legal sanctity, an authoritative source reflective of record of ownership as well as possession. The scheme encompassing the length and breadth of the Union Territory involves the use of modern technology for surveys, extraction of data and final compilation of the records for public use.

SVAMITVA is one of the latest initiatives in the government of India's reforms in Land Records. It is a technology based scheme which changes the rural landscape in terms of quick and convenient access to the land owners, especially those living in Abadi-deh. The initiative also helps in eliminating corruption and hence, it is another step towards people-friendly, transparent, corruption-free governance as promised to people of J&K.

Under SVAMITVA, Srinagar district has become the first district in the country to achieve 100 percent saturation under the Survey of Villages Abadi & Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA) Yojna.

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha recently said that Srinagar district has become the first district in the country to achieve 100 percent property card generation/distribution to the landowners.

SVAMITVA is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, launched nation-wide by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on National Panchayati Raj Day on 24th April 2021.

The Scheme will help towards establishing a clear ownership of property in rural inhabited (Abadi) areas, by mapping of land parcels using drone technology and providing 'Record of Rights' to village household owners with issuance of legal ownership cards (Property cards/Title deeds) to the property owners.

SVAMITVA is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry

of Panchayati Raj, launched nation-wide by the Hon'ble Prime Minister on National Panchayati Raj Day on 24th April 2021.

The Scheme will help towards establishing a clear ownership of property in rural inhabited (Abadi) areas, by mapping of land parcels using drone technology and providing 'Record of Rights' to village household owners with issuance of legal ownership cards (Property cards/Title deeds) to the property owners.

The scheme covers multifarious aspects like Facilitating monetisation of properties and enabling bank loan; reducing property related disputes; comprehensive village level planning, among others. This initiative is a stepping-stone towards achieving Gram Swaraj in true sense and making rural India Atmanirbhar.

The scheme will also help in preparation of better-quality Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) by making use of GIS maps besides creation of accurate land records for rural planning and reduce property related disputes.

"It will also bring financial stability to the citizens in rural India by enabling them to use their property as a financial asset for taking loans and other financial benefits," an official said.

Land is an essential resource for any economic activity aimed at creation of material wealth in the world. Lack of clearly demarcated Abadi area has led to high number of land-conflict cases everywhere. As per reports, millions of people suffer the impact of land conflicts across India and the World. The SVAMITVA Scheme aims to address the root cause for disputes at local level.

Under this initiative, high-resolution digital maps for better Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) leading to improvement across infrastructure like schools, community health centres, rivers, street light, roads etc, through efficient allocation of funds and increased accessibility, will be achieved.

"I want to slide, I want to run and I want to do each and everything I can because I know it isn't going to last a really long time. It's absolutely the best thing to happen to my life — playing for my country. It's an absolute honour, every bit of it," concluded Chhetri.

CS launches 'JK Mobile Seva' initiative; calls for using it for informing public on welfare schemes

Jammu: The Chief Secretary Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta Wednesday launched the 'Mobile Seva' services in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, with an aim to mainstream mobile governance for delivery of public services.

The launch of m-seva marks an important milestone in the mobile-governance in Jammu & Kashmir. The m-seva platform will be used to reach out to citizens and promote proactive citizen engagements by leveraging the mobile penetration in population, especially in remote areas. The informative SMS texts will be sent in English, Hindi and Urdu languages, an official press release issued in this regard informed.

It said this initiative will use a single-SMS gateway (JK-GOVT) to communicate with citizens instead of extending similar services through different departments with different IDs.

"This will benefit citizens to keep a track of Government-to-Citizen (G2C) communications, and receive timely updates in a transparent manner," Dr. Mehta observed.

The Chief Secretary mentioned that the 'Mobile Seva' is

a countrywide initiative under mobile governance that aims to enable all government departments and agencies to provide services through various mobile channels such as short message service (SMS), integrated voice response system (IVRS), Geo fencing, and other mobile applications.

The Chief Secretary also directed all departments to use m-seva platform for disseminating information on their respective welfare and developmental schemes to enhance coverage and encourage participatory governance through direct government-citizen contact.

It was informed that the IT department will act as the nodal department and will continue to add new departmental services towards achieving saturation in a time-bound manner.

Principal Secretary, General Administration Department, Administrative Secretary, Information Technology Department, Administrative Secretary Public Grievances Department, CEO JaKeGA, besides officials from JaKeGA, SeMT, and Information Technology Department were present on the occasion.

Srinagar ranks among 75 top Districts of country under 'Eat Right Challenge'

SRINAGAR: The Srinagar District has figured in top 75 Districts of the country in implementation of the 'Eat Right Challenge for Cities and Districts' of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

The Right to Eat Challenge was launched by the FSSAI, Government of India to ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for the people. The Eat Right Challenge also known as Eat Right movement was envisioned as a competition among Districts to recognize their efforts in adopting and scaling up various initiatives under Eat Right India. These initiatives include strengthening food safety through the food regulatory environment, to provide safe and healthy food options by enabling the supply side and to engage with citizens for adoption and demanding healthier diets.

The activities which were carried out under this challenge include Registration and licensing drives, surveillance drives, lifting of enforcement samples, special camps for consumer awareness, hygiene rating, clean street food, no food waste certi-

fication, reusing of cooking oil, training to Asha and Anganwari workers, eat right campuses to promote eat right message.

The Eat Right Challenge in Srinagar was carried out under the overall supervision of Deputy Commissioner, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, while Assistant Commissioner Food & Safety, Hilal Ahmad Mir was its Nodal Officer.

The Targets fixed by Food Safety Standards Authority of India were satisfactorily achieved, hence Srinagar District figured in top 75 Districts. The campaign ran from 01 August 2020 to 31 December 2021. In this, a total of 188 cities of the country were enrolled under FSSAI.

Speaking in this regard, the Deputy Commissioner said: "The Eat Right Challenge activity was aimed to propagate the message of adopting healthy food habits among the masses to include fortified foods as nutria-cereals in their diets." He also stressed massive outreach to educate people and spread the message of safe, healthy and sustainable diets.

NHM J&K reforms Viral Hepatitis Control Programme

Focus on drug addict youth to stop the transmission: MD NHM

SRINAGAR: Mission Director, National Health Mission (NHM), J&K, Yasin M. Choudhary today chaired a meeting to review the status of various National Health Programmes.

The meeting was attended by HoDs of Gastroenterology GMC Srinagar, Chief Medical Officers and Medical Superintendents of District Hospitals including new GMCs, representatives from Director Health Services Jammu/ Kashmir and Nodal Officers of various National Health Programmes. The outstation officers attended the meeting through video conferencing.

It was highlighted in the meeting that there is very high prevalence of Hepatitis B & C especially among drug abusers/IV users and many patients are facing liver failure.

Mission Director NHM while speaking on the occasion said that spread of viral hepatitis is a matter of concern and among the identified cases about 60 % reported cases are those of drug addicts/ IV users, which needs to be addressed by creating awareness so as to prevent the transmission of Hepatitis.

He also revived the status of Drug Distribution, Patient Status & Reporting in Model Treatment Centres in GMC Jammu & Srinagar and District treatment centers for National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme, Completion of ICUs under ECRP-II; PM-ABHIM; PM National Dialysis Programme; Rashtriya Netra Jyoti Yojna and Training of MLHPs for Expanded Services.

Deprived of development for seven decades, J&K marching now on path of progress: LG

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday presided over the UT-level event in connection with 'Garib Kalyan Sammelan' here at SKICC.

Pertinently, 'Garib Kalyan Sammelan' marks the completion of eight years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in office.

During this one of the largest nationwide interactions, the Prime Minister interacted with the beneficiaries of wide-ranging government-run schemes and programmes, and received first-hand feedback about the impact of these on the lives of beneficiaries.

The Prime Minister also released the 11th installment of financial benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme. An amount of around Rs 21,000 crore to more than 10 crore beneficiary farmer families was disbursed.

To mark the occasion in J&K, the LG inaugurated 100 Amrit Sarovar sites and Grih Pravesh Programme for 27,000 Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (Grameen) beneficiaries, an official press release informed.

It said the LG expressed gratitude to the Prime Minister "on behalf of the people of J&K, for connecting the UT of J&K to the mainstream of development and ensuring progress, social equality and social justice for all."

"It is a matter of great pride that in eight years of Hon'ble PM Narendra Modi's good governance, the people-centric policies have empowered the most disadvantaged sections of our society," said the LG.

He termed 'Garib Kalyan Sammelan' as a significant initiative to highlight the stories of positive change in the lives of common citizens.

"The last eight years have witnessed a record growth, and it was ensured that the fruits of growth are equitably distributed for social inclusion, education, health, rural development, agriculture and improving rural and urban infrastructure," the LG said.

"Under the guidance of the PM, accelerated development and transformation is taking place across the UT of J&K. Increased allocations for Rural infrastructure and Rural health have reduced the inequalities and gap between urban and rural areas," the LG observed.

"Jammu & Kashmir and its people were deprived of development for seven decades. Now, the Constitutional provisions to provide equal rights to common people are being implemented on the ground," he added.

"We have kept the aspirations of people at the heart of government policies and schemes, and we are committed to ensure financial inclusion and that the last man in the queue receives equal opportunity. Under Hon'ble PM's guidance, our aim is to make development a powerful people's movement in J&K," the LG said.

Highlighting the progress achieved in various welfare schemes, the LG said that the government machinery at all levels is working with greater dedication and commitment. "The speed of execution of projects and saturation of schemes has increased five times as compared to what the government used to achieve earlier," he added.

J&K has performed better in Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Rural and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban. Farmer-centric reforms introduced by the government in the last three years have increased the income of the farmers of J&K manifold. The UT of J&K is now among the top five States/UTs in terms of farmers' income with a monthly income of Rs 18,918 per farmer. We have also achieved notable success in our endeavour to end malnutrition in Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

He said 2.7 lakh beneficiaries were covered under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana till last financial year and more than Rs 107 crores have been distributed among them.

In the current financial year till April 2022, 5458 beneficiaries were linked to the Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana and an amount of Rs 2 crore 76 lakh has been directly transferred to their account, the LG said.

Rural sanitation coverage in Jammu and Kashmir is another sector where, as a result of the efforts of the central government, we have registered remarkable progress with 100 percent saturation. Jammu and Kashmir has performed well in the Swachh Bharat Urban Abhiyan. Today, 100 percent of waste is being collected from every household and by November this year, we will also be successful in processing 60 to 70 percent of the waste. Further, an amount of Rs 648 crore has been sanctioned for waste management in all 78 urban local bodies, added the LG.

Speaking on the achievements registered under Jal Jeevan Mission, the LG said the UT government is working on a mission mode to achieve the ambitious goal of 100 percent piped water (Har Ghar Nal se Jal). We have achieved 57.82 percent household coverage achieved so far, which is much higher than the national average of 49.23 percent. Today we have succeeded in providing tap water connection to 10.61 lakh households. Apart from two districts- Ganderbal and Srinagar, all rural schools, Anganwadi centers and hospitals have also been connected with tap water connections, he added.

J&K has secured 8th position in Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) scheme implementation. Similarly, the UT has secured second rank in the

list of Union Territories and Small States under the Prime Minister's SVANidhi Program. Under the scheme, the government is providing assistance to 24,000 street vendors and to-date, loan has been disbursed to 14,078 beneficiaries.

J&K has also improved the ranking under MUDRA Yojana which has enabled small traders to start new businesses or to expand the existing ones. Altogether more than 2.62 lakh accounts have been opened, and Rs 5696 crore has been disbursed to small and micro-entrepreneurs under the scheme. Under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, more than 5.47 lakh metric tonnes of food grains have been distributed till last month, the LG added.

Sectors like Health, Infrastructure, Road Connectivity and Industries have witnessed a massive transformation in the last three years, the LG observed.

"Now, J&K has become one of the leading States/UTs in the healthcare sector and medical education. Two AIIMS, two cancer institutes, seven new medical colleges, 15 new nursing colleges, and thousands of health and wellness centers, besides universal health insurance coverage for up to Rs 5 lakh under Ayushman Bharat-SEHAT without any discrimination have ensured Affordable and accessible healthcare to all segments of society of J&K," he said.

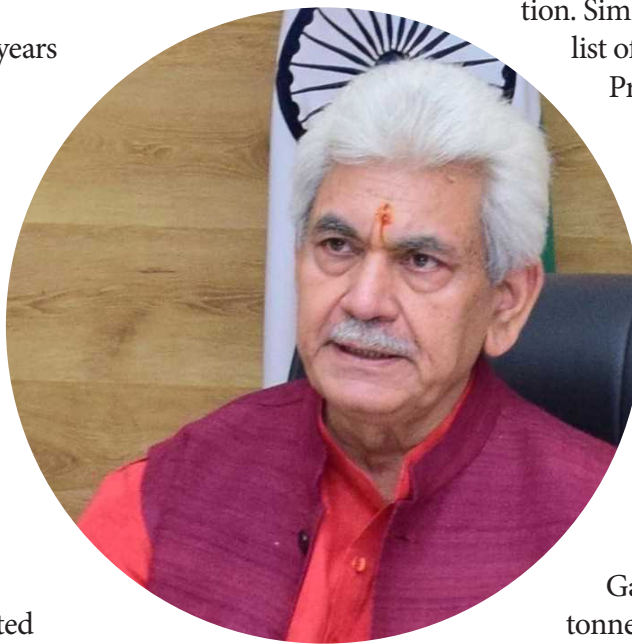
At present 69.60 lakh beneficiaries are registered under Ayushman Bharat-SEHAT and about 76% of the families have at least one beneficiary registered, added the LG.

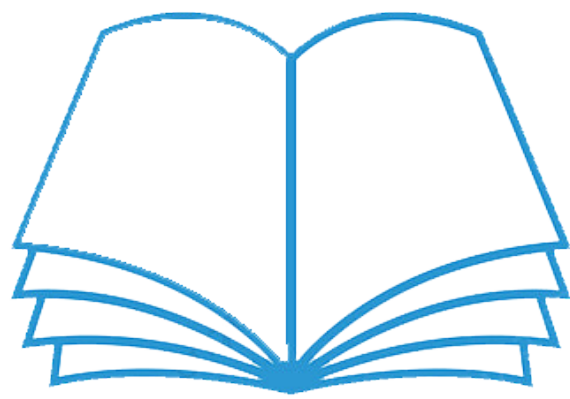
"Earlier, only six km of road was constructed daily in Jammu and Kashmir, but today we are building 20 km of road every day. J&K has improved its ranking to fourth position in the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana," the LG said.

He also said that industrial development in J&K could not take a leap as only Rs 15,000 crores worth investment was received since Independence till last year. "Under the guidance of Hon'ble Prime Minister, within one year, industrial investment of Rs 38,000 crore was approved in the UT and it will increase to Rs 75,000 crore in the coming days."

North India's first Industrial Biotech Park at Kathua has been inaugurated recently and within a year a similar park will be ready in Handwara which will provide support to start ups and other industries in Jammu and Kashmir, informed the LG.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to the LG; Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Atal Dulloo, Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary), Agriculture Production Department, besides administrative secretaries, senior officers of UT administration and hundreds of beneficiaries were present on the occasion.





JKPI Publications

Plastic: A threat to environmental sustainability and human well-being



ZAHOOR AHMAD DAR

Technically sophisticated, cheap, and lightweight, plastic is one of the world's most-used materials. Roland Barthes, a French intellectual in his 1957 book *Mythologies* quotes about plastics: "So, more than a substance, plastic is the very idea of its infinite."

He also made the prophecy, "The hierarchy of substances is abolished, and a single one replaces them all – the whole world can be plasticized and even life itself since, we are told, they are beginning to make plastic aortas."

The world has changed dramatically in the past century. The amount of plastic use has grown exponentially. The current problem with plastic is not how it is used, which is fairly safe, but rather how products made from it are managed at the end of their useful lives.

Plastic consumption in Kashmir

Due to their low cost, versatility, durability, and high strength-to-weight ratio, plastics have become an integral and cardinal part of the global economy. Every year, between 500 billion and 1 trillion plastic bags are used around the world. Every minute, almost a million plastic bags are used! In India, over the last 30 years, the amount of plastic used has steadily increased, reaching over 300 million metric tonnes in 2017. The Plastics Processing Industry has significantly grown at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 10 % in volume terms from 8.3 MMTPA in FY-10 to 13.4 Million Metric Tonne Per Annum (MMTPA) in FY-15. As per Central Pollution Control Board, India's plastic consumption has risen from 61,000 tons in 1996 to 85,000 tons in 2007 to 1, 78, 00,000 tons in 2017. According to Plastic Association Membership in India (AIPMA), Plast India, and TATA strategic analysis, India's plastic consumption is a tenth of the US.

Reports suggest that human plastic consumption is expected to triple by 2025. This clearly indicates that only recycling can offer a viable and domestic option to meet the country's growing material demand.

Plastic bags have made significant inroads into rural Kashmir, like the rest of India. The growing population directly adds to the strain on local resources, putting additional strain on the environment. Changes in consumption patterns are also having a significant impact on the environment. One of the major reasons for the Union Territory's widespread use of plastic bags is its thriving retail sector (supermarkets, grocery stores, and weekly haats). The UT is dealing with not only agricultural and industrial waste but also household hazardous and non-hazardous waste, as a result of rising population and consumerism. Jammu and Kashmir's poor waste management system has exacerbated the problem of plastic waste disposal.

Failure of State action in the reduction of plastic waste

The use of plastic bags is prohibited by law in Jammu and Kashmir. The erstwhile state passed the Non-Biodegradable Material (Management, Handling, and Disposal) Act in 2007, which was used several times to impose a partial ban on plastic carry bags by prohibiting the use of bags thinner than 50 microns. Jammu and Kashmir banned the manufacture, stocking, distribution, sale, and use of polythene bags, regardless of thickness, in January 2018.

Finally, the then state government banned single-use plastic items such as disposable plates, cups, bowls, tumblers, spoons, forks, and knives in March 2019.

According to the monthly progress report for January 2021, treatments/measures taken to reduce or control plastic waste include:

- The Anti-Polythene Squad seizes illicit polythene and bans SUP on a regular basis;
- The seized polythene is used to overlay roadways;
- Using seized polythene alongside traditional fuels in cement kilns.

Despite the legislation, the amount of plastic waste generated is too great to be treated in comparison to the recycling infrastructure available in most cities. Plastic waste generation in J&K (2018-19) is depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Plastic waste generation in the state (2018-19)

	Recyclable	Non-recyclable	Total MT/year
Jammu	1964.7	4584.54	6549.33
Kashmir	11581.45	4964	16545.45
Total	13546.24	9548.54	23094.78

Source: Action plan on Plastic Waste Management (Jammu and Kashmir) accessed through <http://diragriju.nic.in/Plastic%20Waste%20Management%20reduced.pdf>

According to Annual Report 2019-20 on Implementation of Plastic Waste Management Rules, Jammu and Kashmir ranks eighth among all the states and union territories in India in terms of plastic waste per capita generation. The estimated plastic waste generation in UT has substantially increased from 34367.37 T/annum (2018-19) to 74826.33 T/annum. According to the Jammu and Kashmir monthly progress report for January 2021, the monthly average of plastic waste generation in J&K is 6200 MT (app). Figure 1 depicts the per capita waste generation by the state for the fiscal year 2019-20.

Figure 1: State/UT-wise plastic waste generation (per capita for 2019-20)

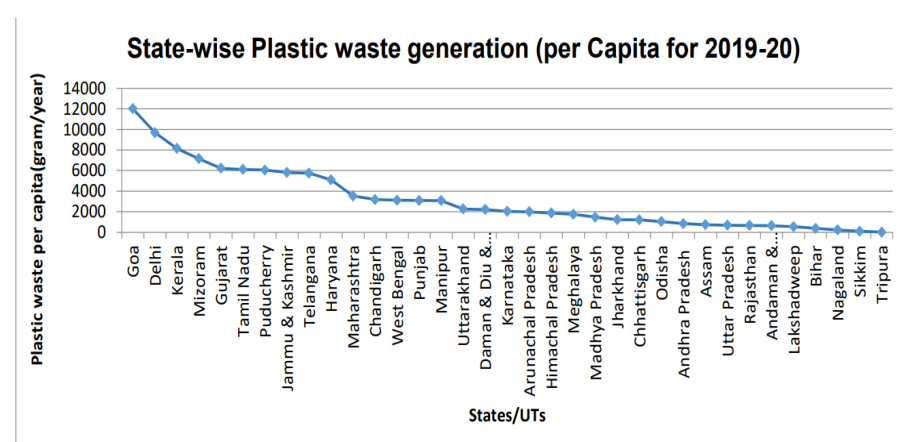
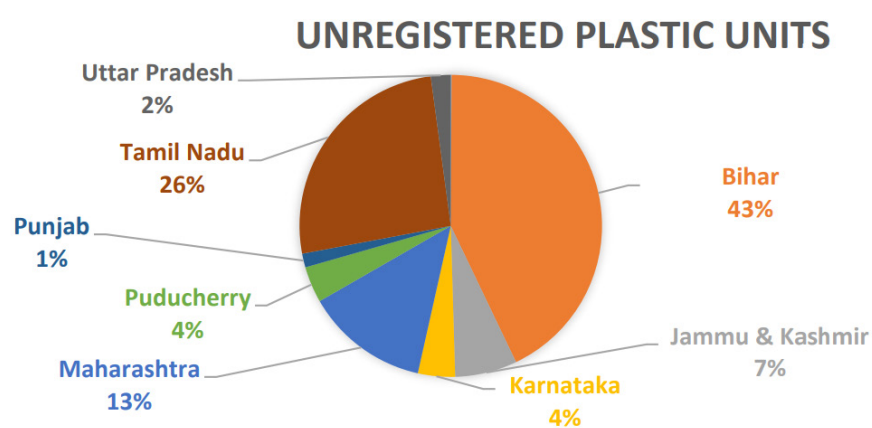


Fig.3: Per capita State/UT wise Plastic waste generation

Source: Annual report 2019-20 accessed through https://cpwb.nic.in/uploads/plasticwaste/Annual_Report_2019-20_PWM.pdf

There were 72 unregistered units in the state as per the annual report 2018-19. Assam, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Puducherry, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh have 1080 unregistered plastic manufacturing/recycling units.

Figure 2 shows the state/UT-wise unregistered units.



Source: Annual Report 2018-19 accessed through https://cpcb.nic.in/uploads/plasticwaste/Annual_Report_2018-19_PWM.pdf

It is quite unfortunate to see that recycling rates in India are far below the international standards, with 27 percent for packaging paper, 60 percent for plastics, and 20-25 percent for metals. The average recycling rate in Scandinavian countries has reached 90%. As per the estimates by Central Pollution Control Board (for 2017-18) 26,000 tons per day of plastic waste is generated in India. Out of which only 15,600-ton plastic waste is recycled which means 9,400 tons per day of waste is uncollected, littered, and unprocessed.

A WAY FORWARD:

Environmentally sensitive areas, such as Kashmir, require immediate solutions to the plastic waste problem. Finding alternatives to plastic products has become more important than ever before in the fight against climate change. Plastic is a high-carbon petroleum product whose production and transportation require numerous energy inputs, resulting in massive greenhouse gas emissions.

According to research, landfilling is the most efficient method of disposal if done correctly. Waste should be collected three times per week and disposed of in a scientific manner. Also, a detailed feasibility study on alternatives should be conducted, with the best types designated for mass production and distribution.

Plastic bags continue to enter the Union Territory from states where there is no ban. Stricter monitoring of inter-state movement will be extremely effective in reducing usage. The region's tourism industry depends on the stunning landscape of lakes and mountain resorts, which is now under constant threat from poor waste management practices. Plastic waste is a major hazard to marine ecosystems. Every year, eight million tonnes of plastic debris reach the ocean. The total amount of plastic in the ocean is 150 million tonnes. In 2014, there was 1kg of plastic in the ocean for every 5 kg of fish, and it is estimated that by 2050, there will be more plastic than fish. Untreated wastewater, according to a scholar, has ruined the Dal lake more than anything else. According to numerous studies, 1,200 houseboats alone discharge over 9,000 metric tonnes of garbage into the lake each year. The lake receives 18.2 tonnes of phosphorus and 25 tonnes of inorganic nitrogen fertilizers from 15 major drains. Every year, roughly 80,000 tonnes of silt are deposited in the lake, in addition to nitrates and phosphates. Due to increased turbidity, the color of the lake's water has changed from bluish-green to hazel, reducing the lake's visual attractiveness and resulting in fewer tourist visits. The water is unsafe to drink, and aquatic life is endangered due to dissolved oxygen depletion.

Table 2: Amount of macroplastic recorded at the peripheries of the Dal Lake (in terms of percentage by weight)

Table 3 The percent by weight of macroplastic recorded at the peripheries of the Dal lake

S. No.	Plastic type (year 2019)	Percentage by weight
1	Plastic bottles	40%
2	Plastic bags (coloured)	24%
3	Plastic wrappers	6%
4	Miscellaneous (all plastic material mix which cannot be segregated)	4%
5	Foam plastics (plates, cups, glasses, etc)	8%
6	Transparent plastic bags	4%
7	Broken plastic buckets, plastic flooring, plastic strings, other plastic utensils, etc	4%
8	Plastic unknown (debris)	10%

Source: Action plan on Plastic Waste Management (Jammu and Kashmir) accessed through <http://diragriju.nic.in/Plastic%20Waste%20Management%20reduced.pdf>

Plastic bags and containers have steadily replaced the traditional 'Kranjul' wicker baskets used by Kashmiri women to transport vegetables. Plastic's spread over the years has thrown a gauntlet to Kashmir's once-thriving wicker handicrafts industry. Plastics can be phased out by promoting local traditional products, which can help restore the Kashmir landscape while also providing additional livelihood options in the state. At a time when the fate of environmental sustainability is at crossroads, the government needs to incentivize the people who make cloth bags and wicker baskets. In Jammu and Kashmir – where thousands of weavers, potters, and women skilled in sewing cloth bags exist in every district – accessibility to alternatives is not that difficult.

CONCLUSION

The environmental externality of solid waste related to plastic bag consumption is a classic tragedy of commons. Individual consumers gain from the use of plastic bags because they are convenient, but society as a whole bears the collective cost of their disposal. The environmental degradation experienced across Kashmir today underlines the need for a paradigm shift from the depletive 'produce-consume-dispose' led linear economy to a circular economy led by 'reduce-recover-reuse-recycle-re-design-remanufacture'.



GEOSTRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF XINJIANG REGION



ANAMITRA BANERJEE

Xinjiang in Mandarin translates to a new frontier or borderland. Also known as Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), Xinjiang lies within the proximity of a cold desert region. It happens to be the most poorly administered province of China but ironically has high economic development potential. Encompassing a total area of 1.6 million square kilometers, it shares a total land border length of 5600 km with eight countries namely Mongolia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, India, and illegally occupied Gilgit Baltistan. The capital Urumqi province is part of the Turkestan region. Within its borders, in the suburbs of Urumqi, lies a location, that has been regarded as ‘The center point of Asia’, strategically unique in its dimension, being the furthest from any oceanic influence from either of its directions.

The Xinjiang Region along with Inner Mongolia, Tibet, and Manchuria acts as a buffer zone and provides its strategic depth to the Chinese mainland by repelling attackers or invaders. The north end of the CPEC or China Pakistan Economic Corridor “Kashgar” is located in Xinjiang as part of the Southern Xinjiang Railway Project. Acting as a gateway to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Iran, it is the fulcrum of Xi Jinping’s overtly ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Xinjiang is considered to be the energy powerhouse

of China, comprising the 2nd largest solar, hydropower, and wind energy resources. Due to its dry climate, agriculture in Xinjiang is heavily dependent on irrigation. Maize, Millet, and Kaoliang remain the main crops and staple diet for the region. Cotton can also be regarded as one of the important cash crops. Xinjiang is rich in oil, hydrocarbons, gas, and other natural resources while being the hub of minerals such as Molybdenum, Tungsten, iron, copper, zinc, chromium, and nickel.

Xinjiang Autonomous Region is home to three Chinese airbases of great military significance namely Hotan, Kashgar, and Ngari Gunsa. The PLAAF has strategically deployed some of the countries’ best-advanced fighter jets on these bases – the H-6 Bombers, J-20, J-10, etc. Xinjiang Military Air Force District is also located here with its Head Quarters at Urumqi in close contact with PLARF (Chinese Rocket Force) and the PLA’s Western Theater Command, operating in the proximity. Four of six major BRI land routes pass through Xinjiang. The CPC (Chinese Communist Party) has converted Xinjiang into a Special Economic Zone (SEZ), an initiative to drive poverty out of Western China with the proper land-use patterns, development, and urbanization. Western China is mostly rural and impoverished when compared to Eastern China. China through its’ BRI project is trying to transform these areas.

ETHNIC INSTABILITY IN XINJIANG

The Chinese Communist Party, after gaining firm control of Xinjiang, began a process of Sinicization. The ethnic minorities in Xinjiang and Tibet became the primary targets. After Mao Zedong’s “Cultural Revolution” in 1949, many madrassas, and mosques were destroyed, while Quranic Studies were completely frowned upon and later abolished. Circumcision and interfaith marriages were forcefully discontinued. Beijing in its’ new policy, decided to send the

majority of Han Chinese migrants to Xinjiang. The main objective behind such a move was to subjugate the minorities, by exerting dominance. In 1980, 1981, 1985, and 1987, Uighurs started a mass protest to wage a 'jihad' and liberate Xinjiang. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, many Central Asian Muslim ethnic groups came into power and stirred a revival of the Eastern Turkestan Independence Movement. One such extremist group was the East Turkistan Islamic Party. The numerous clashes between the Han Chinese and the Uighurs led, to the killing of several Chinese personnel in the fracas. The Chinese government then decided to launch a "Strike Hard Campaign" and Uighurs had borne the brunt. The bloodiest carnage took place on the 5th of July 2009 popularly called as "Urumqi Riots" which involved the Han Chinese and the Uighurs. After this incident, nearly 4000 Uighur people were arrested and put behind bars, in army warehouses, and detention centers. Women and children became the face of the detainees in these camps. The main reason for the conflict can be attributed to the demolition of traditional Uighur homes which was an important sense of culture to the natives of the community in Kashgar. However, the Chinese officials through their released press reports showed the need for dilapidating these houses in the center of the old city as they were not hygienic enough for survival, and were susceptible to earthquakes. The Uighurs see this as a strategy used by the CPC to disintegrate their ethnic community and reduce their reputation within the place.

The Uighurs have been struggling to pull themselves out of the impoverished region being at the core of the conflict with discrimination, marginalization, and poverty constantly threatening their well-being. The framework in place to tackle the situation and to make it difficult intentionally for the Uighur population to sustain, the Chinese government had constructed re-education camps as part of the mandatory course routine for this ethnic group. Stressing it as a need for national security, CPC had initiated to keep the minority population in check under strict surveillance and police bases every hundred meters. As Uighurs cope with the current scenario, tackling ways to meet their ends meet, the region is heavily infested with armored vehicles, and heavy-armed guards, adding an overall gloomy atmosphere to the region.

The continuous outbreak of violence in sparks over the years, and post 9/11, China took the opportunity to prove its legitimate interests in the international forum. Taking cues from the events related to global terrorism, China has been dealing with the Uighurs with an iron hand, further alienating them from all aspects of the developmental policy. Beijing has been fundamentally linking these events to terrorist attacks, sponsored by Uighur groups settled under Western protection. These groups actively hold campaigns to promote the idea of an independent Eastern Turkestan, however, China is not able to get hold of any solid evidence to link the events happening within the Chinese territories. Pointing out to terror outfits like Al-Qaeda, China has momentarily necessitated the need for security from the Eastern Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) operating on the fringes of Pakistan and Afghanistan soon after the attacks in Hotan and Kashgar. There are still speculations regarding the origin of such an outfit by several experts.

Even today, Uighur communities are receiving the same treatment as the Nazi Germans did to Jews (Holocaust). Cruel practices such as "sterilization of women" remains widely discussed yet a hush-hush topic to be heard of. This is done to prevent the growing population of the next generation of Uighurs. All these activities have drawn the attention of human rights organizations and the United States of America has declared this conflict genocide. The region remains volatile still today, due to the ethnic cleansing in the recent past, which called for considerable attention from the human rights activists. Home to various minority groups, in particular, the 'Uighurs' Chinese Muslims are being subjected to genocide by the Chinese authorities. Nearly eleven million Uighurs, a mostly Muslim, Turkic-speaking ethnic group, in the northwestern region of Xinjiang live in constant fear, surrendering themselves to the atrocities carried out by the Chinese officials even in the broad daylight. In the much-proclaimed contesting movement for independence, the Chinese government is doing everything in its power to retain Xinjiang within its territorial integrity. From involving large sums of money to encouraging the migration of large Han Chinese citizens in the region – the CPC is focused on diverting the global attention from the region in an attempt to curb the Uighur population of Xinjiang. The administrative reservation for the major Han Chinese sects in all government-aided opportunities makes it challenging for the



Today Jammu and Kashmir has emerged as a model for the entire country in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic. With 100% vaccination of the eligible population, we have crossed the 20 million vaccine dose mark. In the 15-17 age group, the Union Territory has achieved remarkable 63% target of the vaccination and four districts of Anantnag, Ganderbal, Shopian and Poonch have achieved 100% target in this age group...



Uighur population to thrive in such difficult conditions. With seats nearly 800-850 on average being allocated to the Han majority, the economic assistance provided by the developmental policy can be rarely claimed by the Uighurs.

It is surprising to know that the Muslim countries around the globe, particularly near Xinjiang's borders have turned a blind eye and ignored the atrocities inflicted on the Uighur Muslims. The Neighboring states must use confidential and bilateral links along with international forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) to urge Beijing in granting genuine autonomy. The Uighur Muslims should also realize that complete independence of Xinjiang is unlikely to happen and it comes at the cost of bloodshed. China's PRC Constitution-Article 4 should give autonomy to Xinjiang. China must also change its stance on the Uighur Oppression and provide more job opportunities, and rehabilitation and encourage the participation of Uighurs in politics just like any other community in China. Though CPC aims at the development of the Southern Xinjiang region, Kashgar and Hotan largely remain dependent on agriculture. The constant sparks of conflict between the Chinese Han and Uighur ethnic communities make it unfavorable for the business or industrial market to blossom. Indian spice manufacturing groups, with intentions of expanding their business in the region, had to rethink their business proposals due to increasing ethno-labor conflicts, draconian policies, and regulations which made it nearly impossible to get access to the trade facilities. The Chinese government has become successful in not only taking China as the elite in the economic sector but also emerging as a super-power in the field of geopolitics. To push the BRI project to be internationally successful, China should embrace a decentralized planning structure, particularly addressing the issues of Xinjiang as it goes beyond a mere geographical-ethnic conflict with large investments involved within this political issue.

Iran Nuclear Deal: Background and its impact on the Middle East



YASHI SINGH

The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the “Iran nuclear deal” or the “Iran deal” is a comprehensive document with 159 pages and five annexures. The Accord was put in place by Iran and the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) on July 14, 2015. After the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Iranian students captured the US embassy in Tehran and confined 50 Americans for 444 days. Since then, the diplomatic relations between US and Iran started getting unpleasant while the US State Department put Iran on its list of state sponsors of Terrorism and thereafter was adamant about curbing nuclear projects of Iran. Iran had to face the brunt of incessant sanctions from the United States which now adds up to 1500 sanctions.

It took years of a geopolitical tussle to bring Iran to the table for negotiations to sign Iran Nuclear Deal, but in 2018, President Trump unilaterally withdrew from the Agreement. Moreover, the Trump administration imposed all the sanctions again which were lifted earlier by the means of the accord. President Donald Trump termed the deal a fiasco because of its sunset provisions wherein, all the pointers are stipulated for a temporary period starting from the day of adoption, like for 10 years, operating centrifuge should be dwindled to 5,060 IR-1 machines of the total being 6,104 IR-1s, for 15 years level of uranium enrichment is limited to 3.67% uranium-235, there will be incessant monitoring and investigation of undeclared sites from IAE, for 15 years, approximately, by 2031, Tehran will be able to produce highly enriched uranium; stockpile vast amounts of uranium; utilize advanced centrifuges; perform unrestrained research and development on uranium enrichment and centrifuges; build new heavy-water reactors which can further produce plutonium to produce nuclear weapons. According to the critics, Iran has conceded to temporary provisions of JCPOA in exchange for permanent compensation through the waiver of some sanctions imposed on the country by other nations. After the fallback, from the side of the US for the deal, there are some pertinent scenarios which can one anticipate from the current roadblock: 1) Reviving the original deal signed on July 14, 2015; 2) A de-facto deal that lacks compliance which is also the present condition; 3) No JCPOA.

The deal was finalized in 2015 and the Security Council will discontinue its Resolution 2231, in October 2025, while disbanding all the considerations of the United Nations Security Council vis-à-vis Iran’s nuclear program and by 2040, Iran will no longer be obligated to other provisions of the deal. The driving condemnation against the agreement has been from the regional stakeholders concerned with the issue. They are disappointed with the framework of the deal and instead demanded to involve them in the negotiation process. The Persian Gulf States are less concerned with the structure of the deal but rather, with the sanction waiver which would allow Iran to divulge its financing into its militant proxy networks including Hezbollah and Houthis. Israel is pressing on its need to restrain Iran’s missile program and making it part of the JCPOA which is not been included in the original deal.

For a year, Iran duly complied with all its provisions, even when President Trump applied the strategy of “maximum pressure” by single-mindedly deciding to pull out of the deal. Trump’s policy was furthered by economic sanctions on Iran which left deep fissures within the economy of Iran but the intention to imply the strategy was to bring Iran back on the negotiation table which didn’t occur

and instead, Iran countered Trump’s approach with “maximum resistance”.

The thinking behind the Iran nuclear deal was to prevent Iran’s nuclear program and its conflicts with the Persian Gulf States to bring stability to the Middle Eastern Region but Iran resumed its nuclear activities at an alarming speed after the United States announced its withdrawal from the deal and the series of attacks on some important figures in Iran which came from Israel and the United States. Also, the U.S. Intelligence officials envisaged that, in the scenario of having no such deal, Iran could produce fissile material for nukes. Under the deal, Iran’s capacity to stockpile uranium was around 20% but now it has around 17.7 kg of uranium which is almost 60% and it takes 25kg to make one nuclear bomb. Despite being restricted within the framework of the deal, Iran has produced uranium metal which is an important move to further create a bomb and upon observations from the experts, all the nations taking this step have eventually ended up developing nukes. Iran has also stopped IAEA to carry out its sudden investigations at undeclared sites under the Additional-Protocol.

Under a special deal, IAEA was able to install cameras at the sites for the recording of the activities with the clause of giving the recording only if the deal is salvaged. The attack on the premises of the Karaj facility made Iran remove four cameras from the site while Iran held Israel responsible for the “sabotage attack”. The IAEA report confirmed that Iran deployed new centrifuges at its Natanz and Fordow facility in September 2021. All such incidents restricted the flow of required information from the IAEA to the stakeholders involved but a step taken by then President Donald Trump with the series of attacks from Israel and the U.S. on facilities and prominent individuals of Tehran, cautioned Iran to make themselves stronger as a nation in a bid to revive its economy and protects its territorial integrity.

Iran was also disappointed with Europe choosing to 9 under the decision made by the U.S. to withdraw from the deal. Meanwhile, to keep the deal intact, France, Germany, and the United Kingdom founded INSTEX in 2019 to continue trading with Iran. The agreement focused on trading food and medicine which is already not covered under the ambit of the U.S. sanctions. At present, there are ten shareholders in the agreement. Iran’s economy is largely reliant on its oil export but the sanctions imposed by the U.S. halted Iran to export oil completely. The wide range of sanctions imposed by the U.S. caused Iran’s economy to suffer at a time when Iran was already dealing with years of recession. Oil and Petroleum products accounted for 80% of Tehran’s export and thus adding to Iran’s revenue. The covid-19 crisis exacerbated the economic situation in Iran but they still managed to contain the crisis.

IMPACT OF THE DEAL ON WEST ASIA

The deal remains a crucial determinant in advancing peace and stability in West Asia. There are many critical implications considering the geopolitics of the Middle East. Iran has already placed its foot on Yemen, Syria, and Israel by waging a proxy war by backing militant groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon, Houthis in Yemen, and Hamas in Palestine. These groups in return assist Iran to plug their power in the region by fighting against its archrivalry like Israel. The posturing of Iran in the region is also posing a threat to the Arab States like UAE and Saudi Arabia due to the activities of the militant groups in the region. Last year, despite the friction between Arab States and Iran, both Saudi Arabia and Riyadh took forward a step to meet Iran which also shows the attempts to work on viable solutions instead of flaring up the conflict. It also indicated that both the Arab States are dependent on the U.S. for military aid and political security but the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan made U.S. allies and the Arab States rethink their clinginess to the U.S. support.

Israel and Iran share years of animosity ranging from covert attacks from Israel to Iran waging a proxy war in Israel or targeting its strategic facilities. The deal is of critical concern to Israel but



they opposed the original deal too as Israel was not involved by the enforcers to be part of nuclear diplomacy. Furthermore, they called the deal a futile one as all the provisions are temporary, and further, the deal has nowhere outlined the restriction on the ballistic missile program of Iran. Israel has been plain-spoken about dealing with military force with Iran to completely obstruct its nuclear activities.

THE WAY FORWARD

Israel asserts the need to use military force as a punishment to restrict the nuclear activities of Iran and those negotiations will not provide the expected result. Military attacks or coercion in the form of sabotage attacks to inflict punishment has been used by Israel but it has not stopped Iran to pursue its nuclear activities, instead, they have come to a stage of preparing a bomb. Military force will also close the leeway for diplomacy and it would incite the hardliners in Iran to hype up its activities and any attempt to attack its nuclear sites to completely clear out its trace is nearly impossible as some sites are undeclared and further even after locating the sites, it is nearly impossible to completely obliterate its facilities because Iran being at a progressed stage of preparing a bomb is likely to use all the fortifications to safeguard its nuclear centres. Thus, Negotiation seems to be a credible option to revive the deal and all the stakeholders are on their way to a rickety road to salvage the deal. Though Russia opposed the deal for the time being in a demand from the West for the withdrawal of sanctions imposed on Russia due to its recent invasion in Ukraine which Putin calls a “special military operation”. Eventually, Russia backed the deal after meeting Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey stated, “sanctions would not impede its future dealing with Iran”.

EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep Borrell has assured that the deal will be restored in the coming days but U.S. Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley does not believe that the deal is about to happen since with each passing day it would become difficult for the World Powers and Iran to rescue the deal. The negotiations are being carried out for 11 months now and Tehran’s push for the withdrawal of sanctions and other demands like removing Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) from the list of foreign terrorist organizations. One of the branches of IRGC named Quds Force assists Iran to build up power in Middle East Region. Experts are relying more on the political will of the United States to restore the deal.

The four future scenarios are 1) Reviving the deal whilst withdrawing the sanctions imposed on Iran. 2) Iran compromises some of the proposals made by the U.S. and sticks to the original deal

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whilst accepting the sanctions to be waived on the middle ground, benefiting both parties. 3) No JCPOA. 4) A de facto deal that lacks compliance.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF UNCHECKED TOURISM



ADEELA HAMEED

Tourism represents around 6% of world trade and almost 13% of the total global consumer spending. Unlike most other industries, tourism is essentially based on a good environment, and people should, therefore, naturally be more concerned about its proper protection, preservation, and further development, in its own interest, if not out of altruistic motives.

Negative impacts from tourism occur when the level of visitors is greater than the environment's ability to cope. Unchecked/conventional/mass tourism poses a great threat to natural resources and leads to considerable impacts on the environment such as soil erosion, increased pollution, natural habitat loss, increased pressure on endangered species, and heightened vulnerability to forest fires. It also puts a strain on water resources and can force local populations to compete for the use of critical resources.

The rapidly increasing mountain tourism, a source of wonder and inspiration for human societies and cultures since time immemorial, is of particular concern, because, the elements that attract people to mountains – clean air, diverse landscapes, rich biodiversity, and unique cultures – are under threat, partly because of poorly managed and non-sustainable tourism. Let's talk about Jammu and Kashmir. The seasonal character of tourism and the concentration of tourism activities at a small number of locations, in the absence of tourism policy, have triggered serious environmental and ecological concerns in the Union Territory. Even when care is taken to minimize any adverse impact, tourists by their very number and behavior, and lack of eco-consciousness still leave a strong impact on the environment in terms of the generation of pollutants.

Overcrowding and uncontrolled construction, particularly in the Himalayan hill stations, not only create ugly blots on the landscape but also give rise to problems of sewage and solid waste disposal as well as increased energy consumption. A large number of tourists, both international and domestic, are attracted to national parks and sanctuaries, which afford them glimpses of wildlife, mountains, jungles, rivers, and lakes for adventure tourism, hiking, skiing, and other similar activities. The mistake is when we confuse wildlife and adventure tourism with picnics. Empty bottles, empty cans, and plastic bags are found not only marring the landscape but also threatening animals, who have been known to choke and die from discarded plastic wrappers or containers.

It would be a good idea if the tourism industry undertakes to carry out capacity studies, i.e. the load of people that a particular area can take, in its own enlightened self-interest. In India, as of now, environment impact assessment is being insisted upon as a prerequisite, for all major tourism projects.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF TOURISM IN THE VALLEY

The pristine natural areas, and cultural and pilgrimage spots, remain Kashmir's main tourist centers. However, the increase in the number of tourists over time in Kashmir has led to serious environmental issues and concerns. For example, the hotels and restaurants flushing untreated sewage have polluted various lakes, rivers, groundwater, and other water resources. Moreover, encroachment and demand for more hospitality centers has resulted in deforestation.

The Dal Lake, located in the heart of Srinagar, has lost its sheen and attraction due to the lack of proper waste management. It has been polluted with animal carcasses, weeds, leftover food, and polythene. The main source of pollution in the Dal Lake is

the mismanaged inflow of sewage. Sewage production is directly related to the increase in tourism activities in the lake vicinity which has prompted people to set up new hotels, lodges, and houseboats. Sewage emanating from these hospitality infrastructures flows directly into the lake, causing serious threats to its ecosystem. Floating vegetable gardens, a portion of Kashmir's greatest vegetable-producing areas and furthermore a focal point of fascination for an expansive number of sightseers, are significant polluters.

From the tourism point of view, the transportation system has become the major source of air pollution in Kashmir. A rapid increase in travel demand to Kashmir has increased air and road traffic in recent years. And the rise in traffic has facilitated the emission of carbon dioxide (CO₂), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and greenhouse gases. As a consequence, the region has witnessed acid rains in the past, directly affecting the landscape, natural vegetation, and agro-based industries. The recently installed Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS) at various locations in Srinagar city by State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) have only confirmed that pollution in the city is alarmingly high.

With the uncontrolled tourist growth, there also arises a need for land clearance for new constructions, putting pressure on already affected forest land. A report from the Forest Department in 2010 puts the estimate of land encroachment in Kashmir valley at 4877 hectares. According to the Forest Policy of India, around 33% and 60% of the aggregate region of plain and Himalayan areas, respectively, should be under forest cover. However, sadly, there is just under 22% of forest cover at the national level and a mere 20% in J&K. In the meantime, deforestation brings forth major issues of soil disintegration, loss of biodiversity, environmental change, and furthermore adversely affects the water cycle.

Tourism, being a climate-responsive sector, is directly affected by any unpleasant changes in the weather of a region, like climate-change inflicted storms, floods, less or no snowfall, excessive rains, etc. In the last twenty years, the rise in average temperature in Kashmir valley, as reported by IMD (Indian Meteorological Department), was 1.45 as compared to 2.32 in the Jammu region. According to research conducted by the National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee, regions such as Ladakh, Zaskar, and the Greater Himalayan ranges of J&K have witnessed a decrease in the glacier volume, with most glaciers degrading by 17% – 25%. The great floods of September 2014 can also be attributed to drastic climate change over the years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The unmanaged and unrestrained growth of tourism is detrimental to the environment. Tourism needs to be planned and managed in an environmentally sustainable, socially favorable, and economically feasible way to lower its harmful impacts. Environmentally responsible tourism is a new concept the world over. Its formal enunciation emanates from the 1989 Hague Declaration on Tourism, which advocates rational management of tourism so that it contributes to the protection and preservation of the natural and cultural environment.

The following suggestions should form an integral part of the tourism management policies of the J&K region:

1. The adoption of eco-friendly practices should be made compulsory in the tourism industry, encouraging the protection and promotion of the environment. In this context, it is high time ecotourism is put in the spotlight, which is proving very helpful in the conservation of the environment and wildlife.
2. The Ministry of Planning and Human Resources should account for the rules, regulations, and policies related to the environmental management of all areas. Reliable environmental management and careful development of tourism as well as leisure and housing facilities like restaurants, hotels, houseboats, parks, etc. are required.
3. The type and amount of pollutants along with their sources

should be identified. Appropriate measures must be taken to minimize them.

4. To reduce the ecological impact on flora, fauna, and vulnerable habitats, the ecology and environment of lakes, rivers, and other water bodies should be managed resourcefully.

5. Special services and investment layouts must be aided by the government to promote environmental conservation.

6. Tourist facilities should be so designed as to be energy efficient, taking advantage of the sun in hill stations, like Kashmir valley, to reduce heating, cooling, and air conditioning requirements to the barest minimum.

7. Active participation of the local population should be encouraged by the promotion of activities, where people can directly or indirectly be involved in tourism that affects their living and land.

8. Educating tourists about the impact of their activities on the

environment and measures to reduce them must also be taken into consideration.

9. Deforestation must be avoided. All developmental activities including the construction of roads, buildings, recreational facilities, etc. must be monitored by the authorities to minimize harmful impacts on the region's forest resources.

10. Green transportation initiatives, such as battery-driven boats, electric vehicles, and bicycles promoting the use of renewable energy, should be encouraged to create cleaner, quieter tourist places. People should be encouraged to use public transport, thus reducing traffic and emission of harmful gases.

It can now be concluded that proper management of resources and limiting tourist flow below the carrying capacity of a particular place can help in safeguarding the resources of Kashmir Valley.



THE SEASON OF 'PADDY PLANTATION'

