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



COVER STORY

J&K ON A MISSION TO BECOME LARGEST CLEAN ENERGY- PRODUCING UT

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More than 90% yatris
express satisfaction with
Yatra arrangements

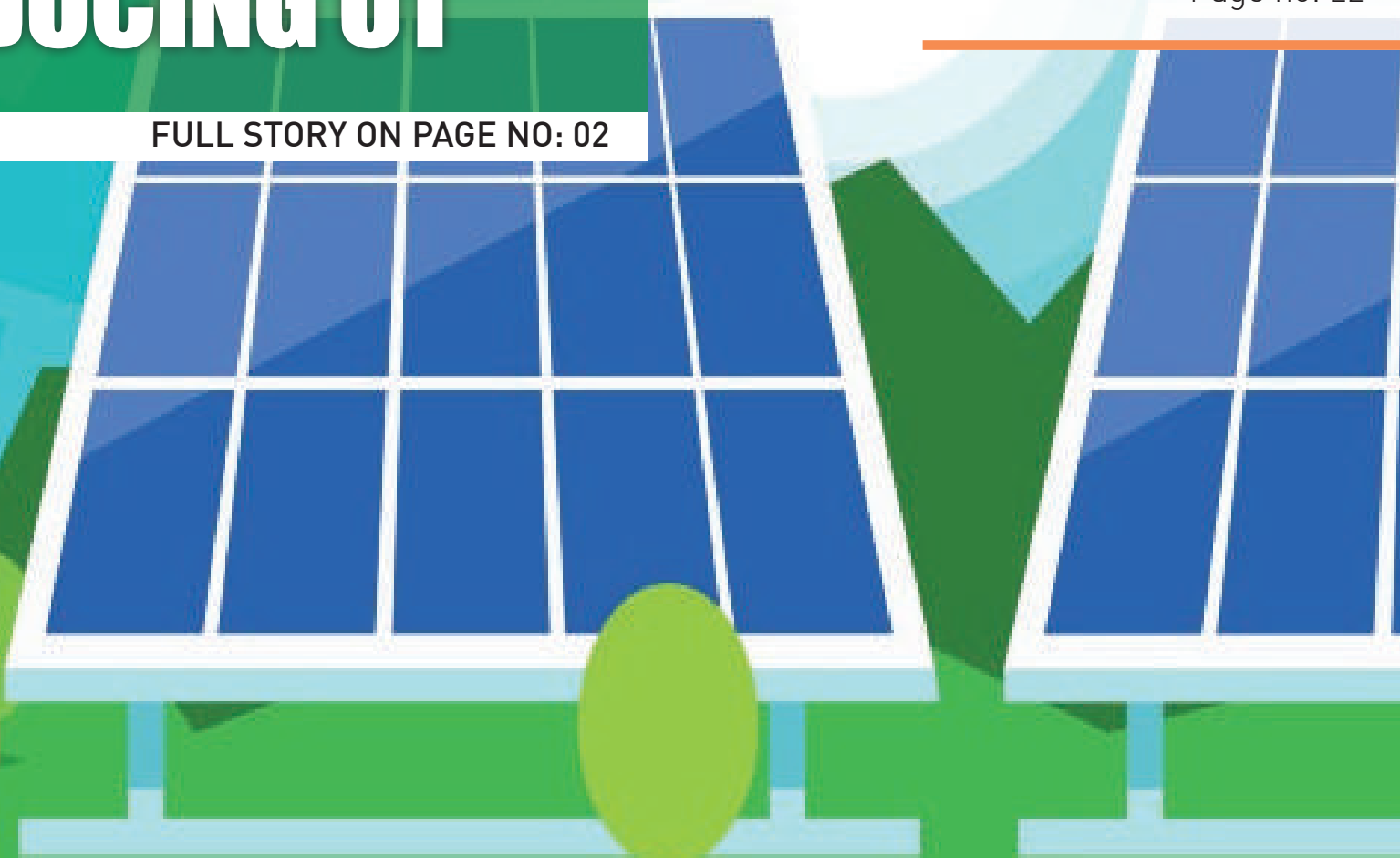
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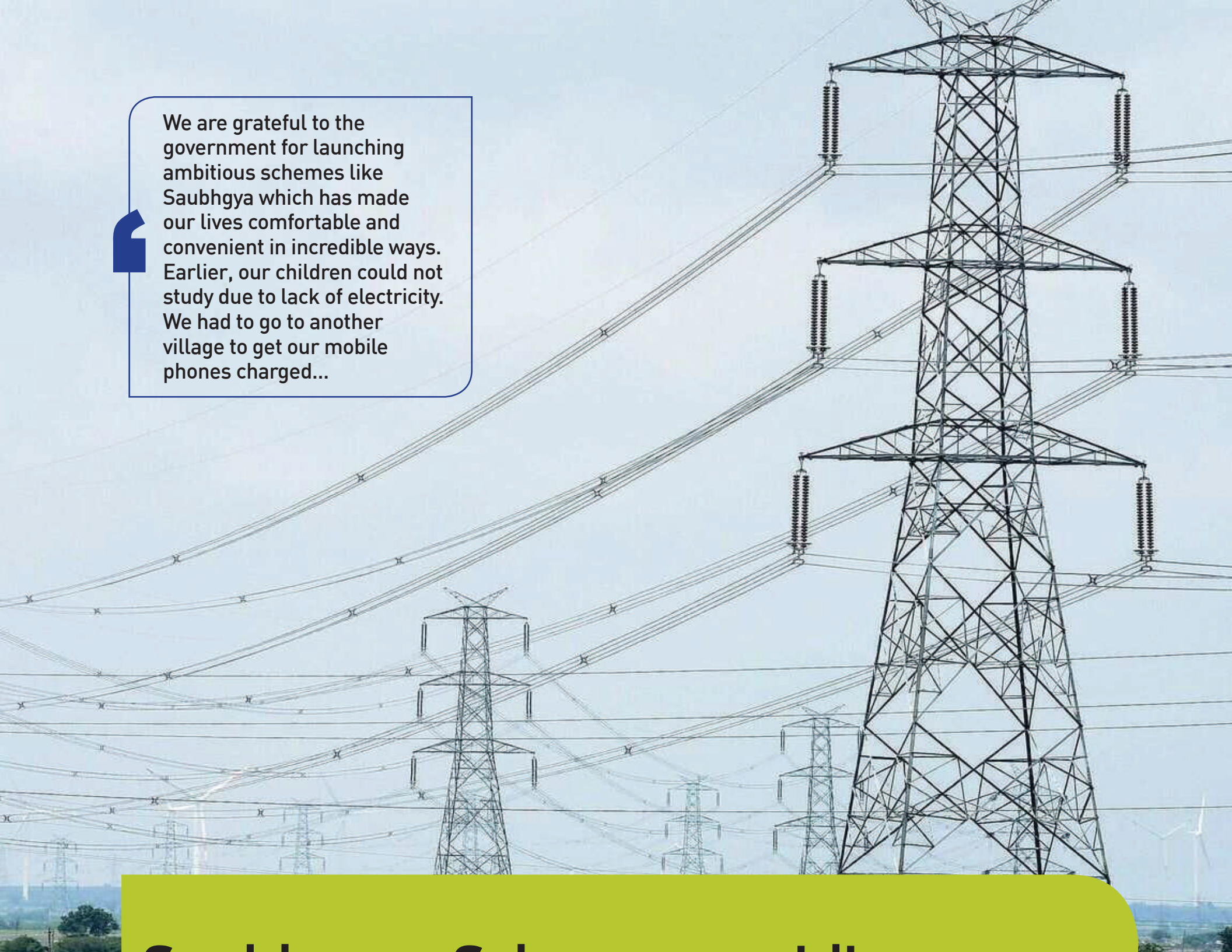
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We are grateful to the government for launching ambitious schemes like Saubhgya which has made our lives comfortable and convenient in incredible ways. Earlier, our children could not study due to lack of electricity. We had to go to another village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

Saubhagya Scheme providing electricity connections to un-electrified households of rural areas

SRINAGAR: Saubhagya scheme has successfully provided last mile electricity connections to all un-electrified households in rural areas of J&K besides providing Solar Photo Voltaic (SPV) based standalone system for un-electrified households located in remote and inaccessible villages/habitations across Jammu and Kashmir.

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 whole UT till date.

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 transformation 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 Saubhgya 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.

Similarly, residents of Tanchmaidan, Pulwama are all praise for Saubhagya scheme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it has provided them regular electricity supply.

J&K has undertaken a large-scale capacity augmentation programme in the power sector resulting in huge leap in power transmission and distribution capacity.

Residents of Jabri village also expressed gratitude to Government for creating electric infrastructure, improving the services in the remotest areas of J&K.

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.

Recently, Batdalow area of Khrew village of Pampore Tehsil in South Kashmir's Pulwama got electricity for the first time.

The residents of the area were jubilant after seeing electric lamps of their houses glowing for the first time.

A student of the village, Showket Ahmed said that they can now read comfortably without any problem. "Earlier, due to the absence of electricity, we had to read lighting oil lamps, which used to make the task more tedious," he said.



J&K on a mission to become largest clean energy-producing UT

200 MW grid-tied rooftop solar power plants to be installed on residential buildings by JAKEDA under 'Solar City Mission'

SRINAGAR: J&K is on a mission to become one of the largest clean energy-producing UT in the country with an objective to reduce dependency on conventional sources of energy and enable J&K in attaining self-sufficiency in its energy needs.

J&K Government recognizes that renewable energy can also significantly increase J&K's and the Nation's energy security.

To achieve this milestone, the work is going on to implement the Government of India's Grid-connected Rooftop Solar Scheme, Phase-II for the residential sector in Jammu to ensure that the electricity needs of the city are fully met from solar energy.

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% of the project cost and a state subsidy component of 25% of the project cost for the installation of solar power panels, below 3 kW capacity, beyond which the central subsidy component remains at 20%. The subsidy is provided to the beneficiaries through the DBT mode.

An official said that 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% annually on account of the saving of energy, with a payback period of approximately 4 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," he added.

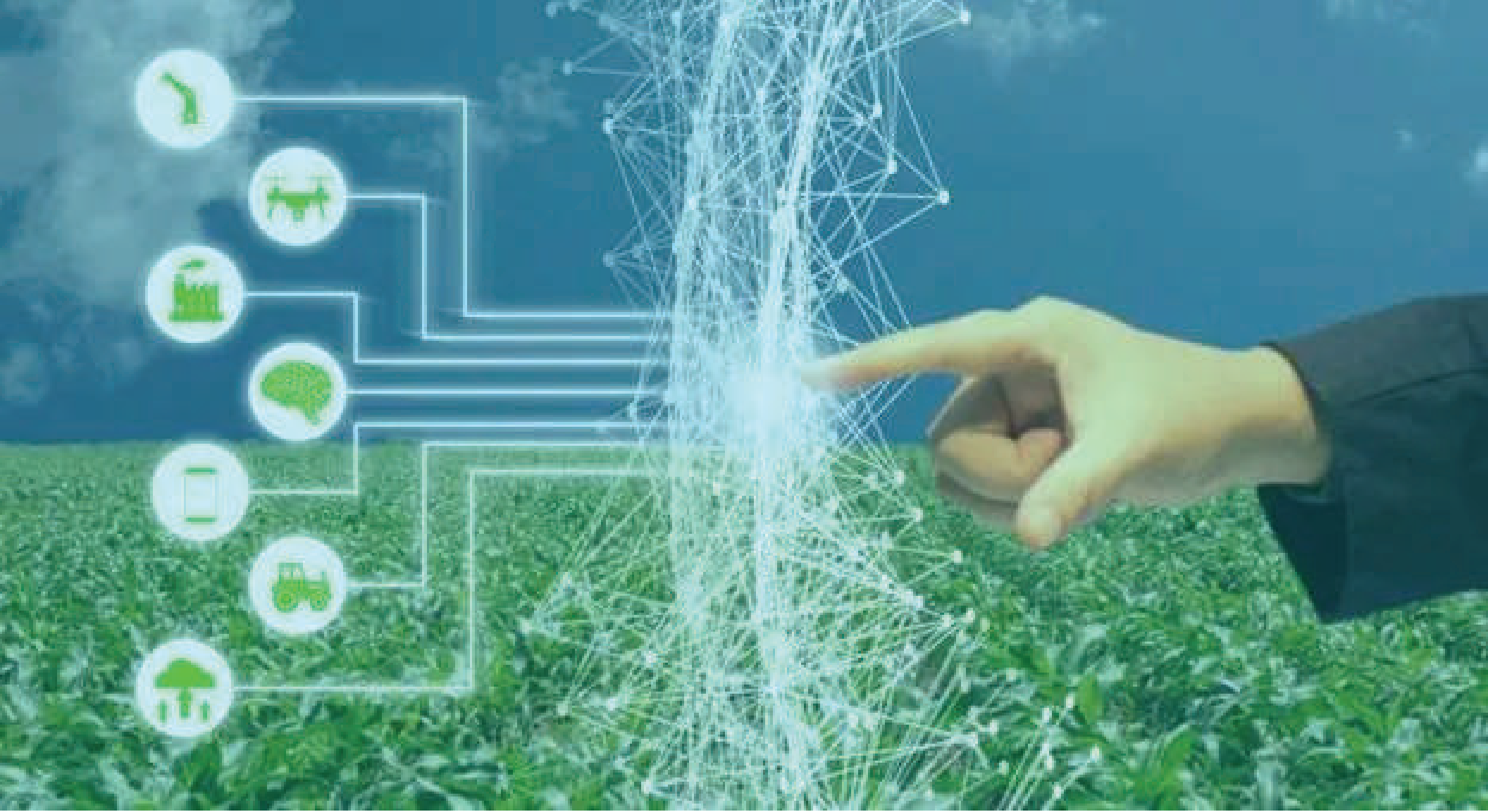
The generation of solar energy through the Rooftop Solar Programme will also help the energy-deficit UT of J&K in supplementing its energy needs, while assisting the DISCOMs in achieving the Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) targets of 10.5% as fixed by the Government of India.

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.

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 5 years post installation; install bi-directional net-meters; and ensure project completion within the given timelines.

J&K has a good potential for solar energy and the renewable energy capacity would help to bridge a part of its power requirement. Under the new budget in PM KUSUM Scheme, 375 Solar Water Pumps will be installed in 2022-23 providing electricity benefit to 47159 souls, direct agriculture benefit to 18750 souls, and indirect agriculture benefit to 160000 souls.

Notably, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a 500-kilowatt solar power plant at Village Pali of Samba which will make it India's first "carbon-neutral Panchayat".



J&K setting benchmark in implementing PM's Digital India campaign

SRINAGAR: J&K Government has launched several path-breaking citizen-centric IT initiatives aimed at bringing greater transparency in governance and ease of living for citizens.

In the last two years, dedicated efforts have been made by J&K Administration to create an enabling environment for digital inclusion and promoting digital literacy to bridge the gap between government programs and citizen requirements. J&K, through innovation, implementation and inclusion is setting unprecedented benchmarks in digital initiatives and leading by example in Prime Minister's Digital India campaign.

Pertinently, J&K is number one in the ranking of UTs in e-governance. Host of initiatives like E-office, BEAMS, Awam ki Awaaz, My-Gov, e-Unnat, Digilocker, Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani have brought transparency & accountability in governance and made transformational changes in the lives of people. As many as 209 government services have been integrated with Rapid Assessment System for real-time feedback from citizens.

Under Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities on "Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani", the government organized special camps at Tehsil and Block level offices, Niabats, Patwar Khanas and Panchayat Ghars to educate public about this digital platform by which people can access their land records with one click.

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

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

Similarly, Showket Ahmed Rather of Tengpora Srinagar is all praise for the government's initiative, who says, "It is really a good step, everyone will be benefited. Earlier getting revenue extracts used to take months. With Land passbook, now everything is with the people.

We have been relieved of the cumbersome process and nightmare of visiting revenue offices."

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

Rinky Chauhan, a college student of Jammu says that digital initiatives by the Government have empowered the student community to access the books, study material even without enrolling for regular courses.

Similarly, Showket Ahmed of Bandipora, "in times of state subject, it was the most tiring process to physically move documents from official to official. Now Domicile certificate is provided after applying from the comfort of home."

Likewise, Irfan Ahmed Bhat, an employee of a Fruit company thanks administration for providing cent percent subsidy under industrial policy after applying through online mode.

Notably, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha recently inaugurated Digi-Mela in all districts to generate awareness about digital solutions and new technologies.

Emphasising the need to take effective measures providing last mile solutions in digital services for the people of J&K, the LG directed the stakeholders to formulate short-term goals of three-six months and long-term vision statements to transform core ICT infrastructure, governance, and services for ease of living, accessibility, and innovation to transform J&K into digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

He also launched the 'Digi Dost' programme aimed at developing a strong network of digitally empowered young volunteers at the district, block, and panchayat level who could work as the brand ambassadors for Digital J&K and Digital India to achieve maximum mobilisation and awareness on digital services.

'Digi Dost' volunteers would also assist in digital service delivery, data collection, training, spreading information regarding the Digital India campaign, and making people aware of cyber hygiene and cyber-crimes.

Door-to-door campaign rolled out to achieve 100% AB-PMJAY SEHAT saturation by Aug end in J&K



SRINAGAR: State Health Agency (SHA) has rolled out an ambitious door-to-door exercise to achieve 100 percent saturation under the Ayushman Bharat PMJAY SEHAT scheme by the end of August month.

Principal Secretary Health and Medical Education, M K Diwedi in a high-level meeting directed for the launching of result-oriented door-to-door campaigns in all areas of J&K for 100 percent saturation by end of August this year.

He impressed upon the Chief Medical Officer and Block Medical Officers to employ all the resources including Asha workers for reaching out to the left-out population from the ambitious welfare programme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The State Health Agency (SHA) in league with district administration has already established facilities at various places to issue golden cards where people are facilitated, guided and educated about the benefits of the scheme and are issued Golden cards. "Our mission is to ensure a 100 percent target by the end of the month. We will cover each and every individual under this scheme," Chief Executive Officer Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT Scheme Ayushi Sudan said.

To intensify the registration process, SHA utilized various mediums to raise awareness among people to register themselves for golden cards.

A constant awareness campaign by the administration through various mediums including TV, radio and print, and social media is already ongoing. The accessibility for the golden cards too have been simplified so that everyone gets it in his or her locality.

Notably, Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) SEHAT has crossed a major milestone of providing 5 lakh free treatments to the citizens of J&K UT recently.

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) SEHAT Scheme has become a ray of hope for poor families who couldn't afford health treatment at prestigious and well-known medical institutes of the country.

Recently, a special initiative was launched for women and their families associated with JKRLM to provide them free treatment.

To provide much-needed relief to the people of J&K, the SEHAT Scheme was launched in convergence with AB-PM-JAY by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) SEHAT Scheme in Jammu and Kashmir provides health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year to all the residents at empaneled hospitals. The scheme covers up to three days of pre-hospitalization and fifteen days of post-hospitalization expenses including diagnostics and medicines.

Under the initiative of 'Gaon Gaon Ayushman', State Health Agency (SHA) has also started to reach out to even last mile villages which remain cut from the rest of the world due to adverse weather conditions so as to percolate the benefits of the scheme down to every beneficiary.

Notably, to ensure hassle-free registration of all eligible beneficiaries under the scheme, the State Health Agency (SHA) has set up a network of more than 8000 Common Service Centres (CSCs) in Jammu and Kashmir. The VLE Centres are also being stationed in villages for ensuring 100% registration and awareness activities at the grassroots level in association with PRI representatives and ASHA workers.

Digital initiatives easing life of common masses in J&K

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir government on Tuesday said that the Union Territory has embarked on an unprecedented developmental trajectory since August 2019, “wherein transformational initiatives in all sectors have been launched with the aid of information technology to ease the life of people”.

“One such reformative measure is ‘Budget Estimation and Allocation Monitoring System (BEAMS)’. It empowered the J&K citizens 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,” the official said.

“Publication of pictorial e-compendiums related to projects completed under Back to Village, District Capex, UT Capex and JKIDFC broadly reflects government’s commitment to engage with the citizens. Similarly, Mobile Application ‘Satark Nagrik’ and Departmental Vigilance Officers Portal of J&K Anti-Corruption Bureau is one of the comprehensive measures of LG administration for ensuring transparent, accountable, and responsive governance,” he said.

The official said that the mobile application is facilitating seamless flow of information about corruption and enables citizens to submit their grievances with ease and mobility. Any citizen having an android based device can download the application from play store. A unique ID number is allotted at the time of registration of grievance which later can be used to track the status of grievance.

Likewise, the Departmental Vigilance Officers (DVO) Portal has been designed to enable an online communication channel with the DVOs of various departments. In certain cases, the complaints are related to ongoing works, current recruitments, and payments yet to be made against contracts etc. By referring these matters to DVOs, violations/shortcomings can immediately be rectified and loss to the state exchequer is prevented.

Regarding the services under PSGA, Government has passed directions to DCs to ensure all services are made available to the citizens within the stipulated time frame. PSGA timelines of these services are being synchronized with the online portal and any default on providing services within notified timelines is monitored by departments for taking action against the commission of willful derelictions.

Transparency in maintenance and upkeep of Land records



was an area which required an urgent intervention. “Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani” (AZAN) is a landmark intervention in this direction. Earlier, there was no mechanism available for citizens to view or monitor the status of their revenue records online. They had to move from pillar-to-post for obtaining even a copy of land records (Jamabandi or Khasra Girdwari).

The opacity in the system encouraged and breded favouritism, redtapisim and corruption putting citizens at the mercy of the system and the scenario warranted an immediate intervention which could usher in transparency and accountability and this yearning gave birth to “Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani” (AZAN).

“Aapki Zameen Aapki Nigrani” (AZAN): Land Records Information System was launched on October 22, 2021 by Lt Governor Manoj Sinha. Under this system, the Public users can now search and view copies of the Scanned data online on CIS Portal- <http://landrecords.jk.gov.in/>.

As Lt Governor Manoj Sinha has said the initiative will facilitate easy online access to the Land Records System, thereby reducing manipulation of the Land Records and improving the efficiency of Revenue offices substantially.

This initiative is a part of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP). The Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP) was launched for improving online accessibility to the Land Records System and stopping manipulation of the Land Records thereby making quality of services in Sub Registrar offices/Tehsils more efficient and transparent.

In order to further boost transparency in public dealings of the Revenue Department, a mechanism of issuing passbooks to people containing information on all their legal land possessions has been evolved.



Mission Youth launches various initiatives in Education, Sports, Entrepreneurship

MoUs to be signed with KU and BGSBU for Coaching Centres for competitive examinations

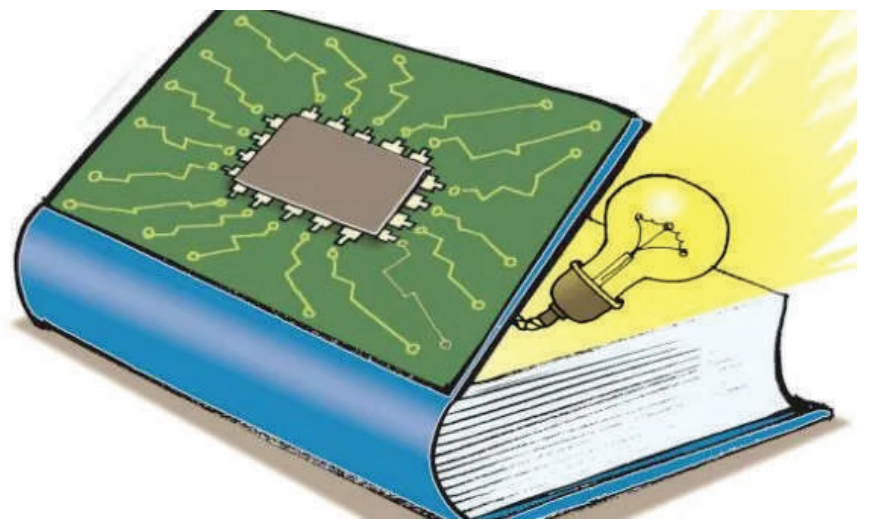
SRINAGAR: Mission Youth J&K today finalised arrangements for various youth engagement initiatives in different sectors including education, entrepreneurship and sports in coordination with concerned departments.

The initiatives have been launched for a meaningful, outcome-based and constructive engagement of youth.

Chief Executive Officer Mission Youth, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary conducted a detailed review of the schemes, preparedness for various youth engagement initiatives and new proposals received from different sectoral partners. Financial Advisor, Tasawuf Amin; Dy Director, Dr Maqbool; OSD, Dr Murtaza Rashid and OSD, Gaurav Gupta attended the meeting besides representatives from different organisations.

The selection list for Civil Services examination coaching was approved for publication. Under the scheme 1000 aspirants will be provided free coaching in selected institutions and Universities. In view of more than 150 selected students still having deficiencies in the document verification it was decided to include them as provisional selectees subject to production of documents. It was decided that coaching shall formally commence from 15th August 2022.

Approval was accorded to the proposal for coaching facilities at Kashmir University campus, Srinagar and Baba Ghulam Shah Badsha University Rajouri with capacity of 100 seats each in the current academic year. MoUs will be signed with both the universities for coaching facilities to be supported by the Mission. Mission Youth also approved establishment of a Government Residential Coaching Centre at Srinagar for which the location and plan



was approved.

Modalities were also finalised for holding National Youth Festival in the last week of August with participation of Universities, IITs/IIMs and Colleges from J&K and other states / Union Territories. The 2-day youth festival will witness final competitions under various themes including Music, Dance, Theatre and Fine arts, in 14 different sub-categories. Inspirational talks, awards to top performers and various other activities are also lined up.

Meanwhile, approval also been accorded to the initiation of competitions under the LG Rolling Trophy in different sectors for which funds have been released to the Youth Services and Sports Department for the early start of competitions, providing required sports equipment, refreshment and mementoes/medals etc. The Rolling Trophy will see competitions from Block Level to UT level over a period of two months.

Plan and schedule for all-India tour for students/youth was also approved and dates will be notified shortly. Modalities were finalised for flagging-off and feedback. The meeting also finalised a number of other plans including Skill Development, Entrepreneurship, exposure visits, innovation, publications and sports. The performance of districts under various schemes was also reviewed.

Online facility developed for citizens to register, download Golden cards

Visit setu.pmjay.gov.in to avail facility

Srinagar: To achieve 100 percent saturation of Golden cards, the government has developed online facility for the citizens of J&K through which they can register for Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY)-SEHAT scheme and download their golden cards at the comfort of their homes, an official press release informed Friday.

It said the citizens have to visit the website setu.pmjay.gov.in and register themselves with details of ration cards issued by the Food and Supplies department, J&K, and Aadhar Card and download their Golden cards. The initiative has been taken to ensure all the citizens get golden cards which provide 5 Lakh health insurance cover.

Notably, the State Health Agency (SHA) recently rolled out an ambitious door-to-door exercise to achieve 100 percent saturation under the Ayushman Bharat PMJAY SEHAT scheme by the end of August month.

Under the initiative of 'Gaon Gaon Ayushman', State Health Agency (SHA) has also started to reach out to even last mile villages which remain cut-off from the rest of the world due to adverse weather conditions so as to percolate the benefits of the scheme down to every beneficiary.

Recently, Principal Secretary, Health and Medical Education, M K Diwedi had directed for launching result oriented door-to-door campaign in all areas of J&K to achieve 100 percent saturation by the

end of August this year.

AB PM-JAY SEHAT scheme has crossed a major milestone of providing 5 lakh free treatments to the citizens of J&K UT recently, the press release said. It said this scheme has become a ray of hope for poor families who couldn't afford health treatment at high-end medical institutes of the country.

Recently a special initiative was launched for women and their families associated with JKRLM to provide them free treatment.

AB PM-JAY SEHAT scheme in Jammu and Kashmir provides health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year to all the residents at empanelled hospitals. The scheme covers up to three days of pre-hospitalization and 15 days of

Projects of more than 6300 MW capacity in pipeline to make J&K power surplus: Govt

SRINAGAR: The J&K government is giving a significant push to generation of hydroelectric power with projects of more than 6300 MW capacity in pipeline for making UT of J&K power surplus.

To improve the current power capacity substantially, J&K has initiated a large-scale capacity augmentation programme. In 70 years, J&K was able to harness only 3500 MW, and now generation capacity is set to be doubled in four years and tripled in seven years.

Since August 2019, 2451 MVA has been added to the total capacity as compared to the 8394 MVA capacity achieved in seven decades. J&K Government launched various initiatives to strengthen and improve power infrastructure in the UT which had remained dilapidated for the last several decades.

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

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

According to official figures 3100 MW of power projects Similarly, 540 MW Kwar project being built at a cost of Rs 4526 cr would be completed by November 2026.

Notably, in a significant step towards boosting renewable energy projects in J&K, in the Union Budget 2022, an allocation of Rs. 476.44 crore has been made as grants towards equity for 800 MW Ratle Hydroelectric Project and Rs. 130 crore as grants towards equity for 624 MW Kiru Hydroelectric Project. It will boost energy transition and fight against climate change.

The distribution capacity is now 16754 MVA, while as in 2019 it was only 12745 MVA. The length of HT line is 45101 which was 41204 Ckms before 2019, while as length of LT line has increased

worth Rs 22315 cr were revised, accelerated and Memorandum of understanding of 3284 MW of projects worth Rs 29600 cr were signed.

Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project in Jammu & Kashmir cleared by cabinet for Rs 8,112.12 crore investment will help in reducing power shortage in the northern region.

“Investment of Rs 8,112.12 crore for construction of the (4×250 MW) Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project has been approved,” an official said.

The project would help in reducing the power shortage in the Northern region and partly to utilize storage provisions of the Indus Water Treaty. It would also help in the socio-economic upliftment of remote areas of J&K.

Under a new scheme “Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS), projects worth Rs. 11767 crore are approved to reduce AT&C losses and ensure 24×7 power availability.

In a historic move to realise the goal of making Jammu and Kashmir self-sufficient in power sector, Ratle Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (RHPCL) and Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Limited (MEIL) inked a contract agreement for the turnkey execution of 850-MW Ratle hydel project within a stipulated timeframe.

J&K has undertaken large-scale capacity augmentation programme in the power sector resulting in a huge leap in power transmission and distribution capacity. The new power generation projects like Ratle, Pakal Dul, Kiru etc, will bridge a major gap in the UT’s electricity requirements.



Saubhagya scheme lighting up rural areas across J&K

SRINAGAR: The government of J&K has said that Power Department Development is working hard in ensuring electrification to every village of J&K, visible from the fact that around 3,57,405 households have been electrified in whole UT under Saubhagya scheme.

“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,” said a government official.

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 of these villages. Village elder of the Gnaouri- Tanta village says they were living a miserable life without electricity till now.

“After electricity was provided to us under Saubhagya scheme, our life eased a lot. Our children now study at ease during

night hours also. Earlier they couldn’t study after evening hours. We had to burn wood for light in our houses,” he said.

Similarly, villagers in far-flung and hilly border areas of Nowshera sub-division in Rajouri are experiencing a big transformation 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 Saubhgya which has made our lives comfortable and convenient in many 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.

Pawan Kumar-, Sarpanch, Halqa Kotiarhbala thanked GoI and J&K Government for realising their dream of seeing their homes lit-up in remote Saddal village.

Notably, 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.

J&K Govt promoting accessibility, accountability through e-governance initiatives

SRINAGAR: J&K Government is promoting accessibility and accountability in public service delivery system with the adoption of transparent paperless working culture across all the departments.

In the Union Territories category, Jammu and Kashmir was assessed for the first time in NeSDA 2021 and scored the highest amongst all UTs for six sectors. J&K is being lauded for achieving this position with an overall compliance of nearly 90 per cent. J&K became the first UT in the country to have good governance index and was also first to launch district good governance index for its 20 districts in January this year.

The operationalisation of two secretariats in Jammu and Kashmir was possible because of e-office and that has put an end to annual darbar move carrying over 300 truckloads of files between the two capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu. This also saved Rs 200 crore per annum and led to an uninterrupted work culture in the entire UT without any official break of six weeks for organisation of files in Jammu and Srinagar respectively.

The adoption of e-office has enabled the simultaneous operationalisation of both Jammu and Srinagar secretariats and was one of the biggest reforms related to the practice of Darbar move.

In assessment of state portals, Kerala became a frontrunner

and the progress made by Tamil Nadu, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh in NeSDA 2021 was also commendable. In service portals, Rajasthan, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir and Meghalaya have topped the rankings.

J&K Government is promoting accountability and has enhanced public service delivery system with the adoption of e-office; a simplified, responsive, effective, and transparent paperless working culture across all the departments.

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

Further, J&K Integrated Grievance Redressal and Monitoring System (JKIGRAMS) has been developed as an e-Governance initiative to provide a 24x7 platform to the Citizens for redressal of their grievances. The JKIGRAMS Portal has been integrated with the Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) of Central Government.

AC approves new govt medical college at Udhampur

H&ME deptt gets administrative control of 2 Nursing colleges in Jammu, Srinagar

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Council on Friday accorded approval to the establishment of a new government medical college in Udhampur which is scheduled to be completed by 2024-25, officials said.

The upcoming medical college at Udhampur will improve the doctor-patient ratio in Jammu and Kashmir as the intake capacity of MBBS students will increase by 100 seats, they said.

"The Administrative Council which met under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today accorded administrative approval to the establishment of new GMC in Udhampur. The project will be completed by 2024-25," an official spokesperson said.

The Union Health Ministry under its centrally-sponsored scheme had earlier sanctioned establishment of two new GMCs at Kupwara and Udhampur, each for Rs. 325.00 crore, the spokesperson said.

This will cater to the ever-increasing patient load, and bring improvement in the medical services at secondary level of treatment in the region, the official added.

Availability of quality medical services at the district headquarter will also reduce the response time for medical emergencies, trauma cases, minimize



inconvenience, decrease IMR/MMR, and increase the life expectancy, the spokesperson said.

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

In another decision, the AC also approved the transfer of administrative control of two nursing colleges in Jammu and Srinagar to the Health and Medical Education department.

These B.Sc nursing colleges were established in 2016 by the Higher Education department, one at Government College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu and another in Government College for Women, M.A Road, Srinagar.

The first batch of the course started in September 2019. However, the teaching faculty for the medical curriculum in

these colleges was being provided by the Health and Medical Education department.

The aim of opening these colleges was to provide technical education in the health sector especially to the female students of both the divisions and address the shortage of human resource and promote women empowerment.

To provide sectoral expertise to the nursing colleges, the Administrative Council has approved the transfer of the administrative control to the Health and Medical Education department, the spokesperson said.

With this decision, all incomes and expenses of these colleges will now be accounted for in the budget of the Health and Medical Education department, the official said.

More than 90% yatris express satisfaction with Yatra arrangements

SRINAGAR: The arrangements in place for Shri Amarnathji Yatra, 2022 have been given a satisfactory rating by pilgrims, on the Rapid Assessment System (RAS) which provides for a feedback of the services provided to yatris, on a scale of 1-5.

The system has captured segment-wise responses through SMS and e-mail.

A total of 1,23,971 communications were sent to yatris, of which 9,389 responded back with their feedback.

On RAS, the arrangements to provide quality food to the visiting pilgrims throughout the yatra-route across all langars and eateries have been given satisfactory rating by 93% of the yatris. With most respondents rating it at 4 and above.

Similarly, accommodation and sanitation has received a satisfactory feedback from 89% and 85%, respectively. Cumulatively, the overall experience of 90% responders has remained pleasant and



enriching.

In addition to the Rapid Assessment System (RAS) feedback, a system of responses/physical feedback has also been instituted and yatris are requested to rate services, infrastructure and facilities in respect of 20 parameters. An analysis of 20 days of these feedback forms indicated that more than 90% of yatris have expressed their satisfaction on these services which are consistent with the feedback analysis of

RAS. This indicates high level of satisfaction in the facilities being provided to the yatris.

The Chief Secretary appealed to such yatris, who faced problems during the yatra, to highlight their grievances to the Camp Directors who would address any inconvenience to yatris.

The Government and Shrine Board are analyzing areas of concern mentioned by Yatris to further improve the experience.

J&K govt making remarkable improvement in power sector, to ensure 24*7 power supply

SRINAGAR: Over the past many years, the determined effort of J&K Government has ensured that every citizen of J&K realizes the dream of electricity despite weather vagaries and difficult terrain.

The UT administration has ensured that common citizens get access to basic necessities of quality roads, electricity and water on priority basis. The aim of the administration is to provide quality electricity to all citizens and businesses and these augmented facilities will address the important need of the growing economy.

To address the current power deficit, J&K has initiated a large-scale capacity augmentation programme. In 70 years, J&K was able to harness only 3500 MW, and now generation capacity is set to be doubled in four years and tripled in seven years.

Currently, Transmission & Distribution projects worth Rs 2000 crore are being completed, and an additional amount of Rs 6000 crore has been allocated by the central government to strengthen the Sub-Transmission & Distribution network across the UT. This will help the administration to bridge the basic infrastructural gap between cities and villages.

Since August 2019, 2451 MVA has been added to the total capacity as compared to the 8394 MVA capacity achieved in seven decades. J&K Government launched various initiatives to strengthen and improve power infrastructure in the UT which had remained dilapidated for the last several decades.

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

Jammu & Kashmir is bestowed with an estimated hydro-pow-

er potential, out of which 14,867 MW has already been identified by Central Electricity Authority. The J&K is all set to double the Hydropower Generation Capacity in next 3 years from existing capacity of 3500 MW.

In this direction, 5 Mega Hydro-power projects viz Ratle (824 MW), Kirthai-II (930 MW) Sawalakote (1856 MW), Dulhas-ti-Stage II (258 MW) and Uri-I Stage-II (240 MW), having total capacity of 4134 MW have been taken-up for execution in collaboration with NHPC. The likely investment in these projects is Rs 34,882 crore and on completion will make J&K power surplus.

Notably, Jammu and Kashmir achieved a major milestone under Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana 'Saubhagya' with the Union Territory accomplishing the 100 percent target of rural electrification.

The J&K administration has proactively worked in ensuring electrification to every village which is visible from the fact that almost 3,57,405 households have been electrified in whole of the UT. J&K has also received a reward of Rs100 crore from the Government of India for achieving the target of 100% electrification ahead of the timeline.

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

Power Department introduced Feeder Data Monitoring through state-of-the-art E-support systems which will help in direct access/monitoring of AT&C losses and power reliability indices for all feeders.



Govt initiates various interventions to upgrade Animal Husbandry sector in J&K

SRINAGAR: J&K Government has formulated attractive schemes to improve the dairy sector in Jammu and Kashmir which is directly proportional to improving the socio-economic condition of people.

With an aim of Doubling Farmers' income from dairying, the Administration is working tirelessly to ensure utmost priority is being extended to dairy development in the union territory by way of implementing various developmental schemes, initiatives, policies, among others.

Integrated dairy development scheme (IDDS) is another scheme which not only focuses on providing financial assistance, but also supporting the dairy producer by providing milking machine, bulk milk cooling unit at 50% subsidy. The scheme also provides paneer making machine, khoya making, dahi making, cream separator, ice cream making machine, butter and ghee making machine, milk van, milk ATM and DG Set, to aspiring entrepreneurs who try to create their start-ups in dairy sector.

With the implementation of prestigious flag-ship schemes, viz., Rashtriya Gokul Mission, IDDS, Dairy Development Scheme (DDS), Feed & Fodder Development Scheme (F&FDS), Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund, Extension of Kisan Credit Card facility to animal husbandry farmers, Establishment of cluster model milk villages under Tribal Sub Plan, etc, dairying with high yielding crossbred cattle is receiving an upgrade which has created employment avenues, led to entrepreneurship development and thereby generated ample scope for developing the dairy farming on commercial lines as a business enterprise.

It is because of these schemes milk production in the Valley has grown over 250% during the last two decades and now there are more than 50,000 successful operational commercial dairy units in the valley. Despite the current urban growth, the dairy sector contributes to the maintenance of safe, resilient and sustainable rural areas.

From selling dry fruits in a small shop and struggling to meet his family's needs to running a dairy farm that sells around 200 litres of milk per day, Manzoor Ahmed from Bankoot Ramban district has come a long way as an entrepreneur.

Starting his dairy farm in Bankoot, Banihal with four cows sanc-

tioned by Animal Husbandry Department under the Integrated Dairy Development Scheme (IDDS). Ahmed sells around 200 litres of milk per day and records monthly sales of Rs 3 lakh with smart profits and employees four locals at his farm.

He expressed gratitude to the government for providing him financial assistance to expand his dairy farm. He is planning to upgrade his dairy farm and install all machines like milking machine, milk cooler, ATM milk machine and a Genset.

Government is also working on cooperatives, as it helps to make milk production profitable. Jammu and Kashmir milk producers cooperative limited (JKMPCL) is working to raise the capacity from 50,000 LPD of milk production to 3 lakh LPD.

Similarly, Tahir Ahmad Rather from the Madar area of Bandipora, started a dairy farm in 2020 with the handholding of Animal Husbandry Department. Today he has eight cows that provide over 90-95 litres of milk daily.

Tahir's father Bashir Ahmad Rather also manages the farm along with him and they distribute milk across Bandipora, thus catering to the milk requirements of the district's population.

Narrating his venture's success Tahir said, "I started this dairy farm in 2020 and it is helping me to earn my livelihood. I am grateful to Animal Husbandry Department, Bandipora who helped me to establish this unit."

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

Apart from several schemes, the government is looking at various interventions like genetic up-gradation of cattle, cattle induction, fodder development, milk procurement and processing and health coverage and risk management.

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



Resurrected J&K's agriculture & allied sector by filling credit gaps, diversification, storage capacity, market linkages: LG

Says, transformation in agriculture not just about productivity but also about food security, empowerment of farmers

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday addressed the valedictory session of multi-stakeholder convention on holistic development of agriculture & allied sectors in J&K, at SKICC Srinagar.

Appreciating the organisers for the convention, the LG, according to an official press release said that such efforts will deepen our understanding on critical gaps and steps required for transforming and rejuvenating the main pillar of our economy.

“Deliberations among eminent agricultural scientists, policy planners, policy makers, academia and farmers will lead to the formulation of a futuristic roadmap for rapid growth in agriculture and allied sector,” the LG added.

He also noted that the UT's Agriculture & allied sector was performing much below its potential in recent years. “J&K administration took several measures to reverse the declining trend by filling credit gaps, diversification, high-density plantation, building storage capacity, market linkages and extension services,” he added.

“Agriculture growth last year was recorded at 3.9 percent and food processing at 11.18 percent. However, we have a huge number of small and marginal farmers who need financial support and benefits of the central & UT schemes, and handholding to meet the challenges,” observed the LG.

Noting that the allied activities contribute more than 15 percent in total farm income, the LG said that the dairy, livestock, poultry & fisheries can become engines of high growth, and emphasized the need to make massive efforts for creating awareness amongst the farmers to tap its tremendous potential and benefit from several schemes of the centre and UT.

“In the last two years, we have come out with a viable strategy to achieve the historic task of ensuring higher incomes to our farmers. We have overcome several hurdles to sustain a higher rate of agriculture & allied sectors growth and made it more equitable and inclusive,” he said.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, “we are working relentlessly for the welfare of the farmers, especially extending handholding to small and marginal farmers. A large population which was deprived of progress and prosperity for decades is now getting equal opportunities and equal rights,” the LG added.

He urged the high-powered committee of agricultural scientists being constituted under the chairmanship of renowned scientist, Dr. Mangala Rai, to prepare a futuristic blueprint which can be implemented in the next three years.

The LG also highlighted the steps taken to exploit untapped opportunities offered by horticulture and ensuring end-to-end approach from plantation to post-harvest management and processing to marketing in order to increase the quality production and exports.

“Transformation in the agriculture & allied sector is not just about productivity but also about food security, empowerment of farmers and prosperity of small farming families. The government is determined to translate the benefits of growth into the financial security of farmers,” the LG said.

“The UT Government is providing as many benefits to the agriculture sector as available to those in the manufacturing sector, like, easy access to credit, infrastructure, pre and post harvest facilities, covering risks & uncertainties and various interventions and schemes for the benefit of farmers,” he added.

He also asked the NAFED to speed up the high density plantations in order to achieve the set target of 5500 hectares of high density cultivated within the stipulated time frame.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, called for working out realistic plans and making committed efforts for doubling the economy of J&K in the next five years.

He further stressed on effective utilization of assets and exploring vast possibilities and opportunities in the sector to add Rs 50,000 cr in Agriculture & allied sectors in the coming years.

Dr Mangala Rai, former DG ICAR emphasized the need to have a clear vision, adopting bottom-up approach, focusing on resource planning, policy interventions, formulating district level plans, and inviting suggestions from experts, farmers and other stakeholders as a way forward to achieve tangible results on ground.

He further advised for taking efficiency-mediated sustainable productivity and profitability enhancement measures.

Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, in his address, informed about the inputs received from the experts, scientists, progressive farmers during the convention regarding proposed interventions, policy planning, formulation of plans, besides constitution of working groups for preparing a roadmap to facilitate the growth trajectory of agriculture & allied sectors in J&K.

Prof Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST Kashmir gave a detailed presentation on Rethinking Agriculture in J&K, policy recommendations covering various important aspects of agriculture & allied sectors.

Prof. J P Sharma, Vice-Chancellor SKUAST, Jammu highlighted the learning outcomes achieved from the deliberations held during the two-day long convention on holistic development of agriculture & allied sectors in J&K.

Dr. U S Awasthi, Managing Director, IFFCO, also shared his experience in the sector. On the occasion, the LG inaugurated a weekly documentary programme on success stories in agriculture and allied sectors “Nothing Succeeds like Success”.

Abdul Hamid Wani, Secretary J&K Advisory Board for Development of Kisans highlighted the objective behind the weekly documentary programme – an initiative of DD Kashir in collaboration with J&K Advisory Board for Development of Kisans.

Eminent agricultural scientists, experts, policy makers, academia, progressive farmers, besides HoDs, members of J&K Advisory Board for Development of Kisans, senior officials, and prominent citizens from all walks of life attended the valedictory session.

AC approves Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Rules

Gives nod to renaming public institutions after martyrs, eminent persons

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Council (AC) on Friday approved the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Rules 2022 to protect the interests of depositors.

“The AC approved the Jammu and Kashmir Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Rules, 2022, under the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, 2019,” an official spokesman said.

The Act provides a comprehensive mechanism to ban unregulated deposits and to protect the interests of depositors.

The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Act, 2019, puts a ban on the promotion, operation, and advertisement of unregulated deposit schemes, which lead to fraudulent default in the repayment or return of deposit amount on maturity, the spokesman said.

A prize chit or a money circulation scheme is also banned under the provisions of the Act, he added.

The Jammu and Kashmir Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Rules, 2022, lay out the provisions and scope of powers and duties of the competent authority under the Act; powers vested while conducting investigation or inquiry; powers relating to



absconding persons; power to seize properties; power to appoint legal practitioner and others; the power of government to empanel agencies for forensic or digital audit, valuation or sale of assets; valuation reports to be obtained while releasing properties attached; and ceiling for Self Help Groups.

Mwanwhile, AC accorded approval to naming of schools, roads and buildings after martyrs and eminent persons, officials said.

The AC approved naming of schools,

roads and buildings after martyrs and eminent persons under the ongoing “Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav” celebrations, an official spokesperson said.

“As a mark of respect and acknowledgement of the exceptional contributions towards the security and development of the Union territory, the identified institutions will be renamed after the martyrs and living legends from Jammu and Kashmir,” the spokesperson said.

He said in Jammu province, the institutions will be renamed after Martyr Const. Rajinder Kumar, Martyr Const. Raj Kumar, Martyr Ct Naseeb Singh, Martyr SPO Jalal Din, Martyr Ct. Shamim Ahmed, Martyr HC. Raghu Nath, Martyr Sep. Joginder Singh, Martyr Havaldar Sartool Singh, Martyr Ct. Raj Kumar, and Martyr Ct. Jagdev Singh.

Similarly, in Kashmir region, the institutions will be named after Late Sarwanand Kaul Premi, Martyr Reyaz Ahmad Lone, Martyr Rfn. Mohammad Safer Khan, Martyr Para Trooper Shabir Ahmad Malik, Martyr Rfn. Abdul Hameed Chara, Martyr HC Abdul Rashid Kalas, Martyr Sgct. Ghulam Mustafa Barah, and Martyr HC Sheraz Ahmad, the spokesperson said.

J&K admin notifies up to 125% enhancement in scholarship for tribal students

Srinagar: In a major boost to quality education for tribal students, the Jammu and Kashmir administration Monday notified up to 125 percent enhancement in the scholarship amount for higher studies in government and recognised private institutions including universities and colleges, officials said.

The Tribal Affairs Department notified the first ever revision of scholarship amount since 2011-2012 and also increased the number of courses covered to over 350 from existing less than 50, they said.

The officials said the department, with an aim to boost support to the education of tribal students, has increased the scholarship in Group-A courses from existing Rs 30,000 per annum to Rs 72,000 per annum, including Rs 12,000 allowances.

The scholarship for Group-B courses which was stagnant at Rs 20,000 per annum since 2011-12 has now been enhanced to Rs 53,200, including Rs 8200 as allowances, they said.

In Group-C courses, the scholarship has been enhanced from Rs 18,000 to Rs 41,700, and in Group-D courses from Rs 12,000 to Rs 28,700 including allowances, the official said.

Secretary, Tribal Affairs Department, Shahid Iqbal Choudhary said the government has enhanced the scholarship amount to fund the tuition and other expenses in higher education starting Class 11 and up to post-Graduate courses.

“The revision of scholarship for Scheduled Tribe (ST) students

was overdue for more than 10 years,” he said.

He said that in view of the persistent demand of students over the years and in wake of emerging fields of studies, the department has also added more than 300 new courses covering management, soft skills, robotics, data analytics, block chain, artificial intelligence, aviation, coding and so on, under the scholarship scheme.

“The scholarship will now be revised every two years based on various parameters including cost of living, fee structure, expenses on books, stationery and other allied material.

“The scholarship will be disbursed through an online portal which is notified to be live from July 20 for fresh applications and students have been advised to ensure accurate information of various components of scholarship is filled in through respective institutions before the cut-off date August 31,” Choudhary said.

The department had earlier this year awarded the highest-ever Rs 31 crore scholarship and also covered backlog cases of previous years.

The scholarship for students enrolled in seasonal centres has also been enhanced and a proposal is under consideration for raising the pre-matric scholarship as well, the officer said.

He said the department has enhanced the scholarship budget to Rs 50 crore for the financial year 2022-23.

44 DVCs established at Gram Panchayat level across J&K

‘DVCs to enable delivery of governance effectively through IT enabled services’

SRINAGAR: To empower Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) at Gram Panchayat level, 44 Digital Village Centres (DVCs) have been established, two in each district, across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Under this mission, 44 Panchayat Ghars were identified by concerned District Commissioners. The DVCs were established in these Panchayat Ghars and were equipped with IT infrastructure, other equipments and all connectivity.

DVCs will act as one stop service solution at the village level and provide services like Wi-Fi Hotspots, telemedicine, Agricultural support service, digital payments and other G2C/B2C services. IT department, with active support of Finance Department, plans to establish more such DVCs in rest of the Gram Panchayats of J&K.

The programme was launched on pilot basis at a cost of Rs 5 Crore across 44 villages in J&K. In the first phase, two villages are being taken up from each district, feasible in terms of connectivity (Fibre VSAT) to offer digital services. After ascertaining the impact in the pilot phase, remaining Gram Panchayats are being taken up in second phase.

The basic aim of the programme is to deliver governance effectively through IT enabled services, generate awareness regarding implementation of Government Schemes and upgrade the socio-economic status of the rural masses.

The existing Gram Panchayat buildings are designated as Digital Village Centres (DVCs), provided with facilities like Smart LEDs, Computers, Screens, internet and other relevant facilities. The Village Level Workers (VLWs) of the Rural Development Department are the custodians of the DVCs; responsible for overall management of the centres. These centres are looked after by concerned village Nambardar/Lambardar(s) and Chowkidar(s) as well.

After inaugurating 44 digital village centres in Jammu and Kashmir, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that a new era of development has rightly started in the Union Territory, which has taken a giant leap towards inclusive development.

“A new era of development has rightly started in Jammu and Kashmir, and we have taken a giant leap towards inclusive development. Today, 44 panchayats, 40 blocks have been dedicated to the people in the form of Digital Village Centres and arrangements have been made to reach out with all the online schemes of the government,” said Sinha.

SSH in Srinagar all set to conduct renal transplant surgeries



Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir government-run Super Specialty Hospital here is all set to conduct renal transplant surgeries as the necessary approval has been secured and the infrastructure put in place, officials said on Sunday.

It will be the second such facility in the Valley after Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, where the complicated medical procedure will be performed.

The Super Specialty Hospital (SSH) has been approved for renal transplant surgeries and will start functioning next month, the officials said.

The hospital, located at Shireen Bagh here, has put in place all necessary infrastructure, they said.

Registration and permission for renal surgery at the facility were secured in September last year, they added.

“The patients have to be cleared by an authorisation committee, constituted already by the government. The process takes some time,” the officials said.

There is a team of over 15 specialists who will be conducting these procedures, they said.

The team will be initially guided by the director of Urology and Renal Transplant and Robotic Surgery at Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre Mumbai, Dr (Prof) Shailesh Raina, the officials said.

The treatment will also be done under the PMJAY Sehat scheme, they said.

“The patients can have the procedure done here at almost zero cost. The average transplant procedure costs Rs 5 lakh with additional expenditure incurred on travel, lodging and boarding in a metro city like Delhi which is an expensive affair.

“The patients will be saving at least Rs 4.5 lakh as most of the expenses are covered under the Ayushman Bharat scheme,” Dr Syed Sajjad Nazir, Professor and Head of Department, Urology, Uro-oncology and Renal Transplantation Centre, SSH, said.





E-Unnat web portal fulfills dream of J&K citizens of responsive Governance

SRINAGAR: J&K Government is empowering the citizens of J&K, particularly youngsters to avail government services at the click of a button on e-portal; accessed by logging into eunnat.jk.gov.in.

It is a dream come true for the youngsters who always aspired for using the power of technology to access and avail services provided by different departments of the UT to become a partner in the governance of UT.

Being tech-savvy they always envisioned of the system that is in consonance with their wishes and aspirations. They wanted to use the gadgets in their hands to reach where they had to spend days wandering in the corridors of government offices.

It was a change they had envisioned. It was only a bleak, far-off idea they used to crave for. It was their desire. A hope to realize their innate potential. An easy opportunity to fill colours in their dreams. That also without having to tire themselves in the labyrinthine alleys of offices and departments.

Then a system took shape that truly sensed the needs and aspirations of these youngsters. It foresaw what these youngsters were harboring for years. Those at helm took it upon themselves to materialize what was immaterial for all these years. They started working on all these deliverable and dedicating the same to public one by one. This new dispensation embarked on the path of less government more governance.

It is in this pursuit the LG, Manoj Sinha's able administration powered by an efficient team of officers led by Chief Secretary Dr Arun Kumar Mehta worked day in and day out to bring paperless and corruption free administration at the doorsteps of people.

The recent launching of unified, single digital platform called e-Unnat for availing much of the significant government services is an instance favoring the same.

From this single interface a one-time registration gives a person access to all these services and provisions.

Be it registration of birth or death, obtaining NOC for installing the mobile tower, street vending license, registration of dairy farm/Gaushalla, road cutting permission, permission

for trade fair (Mela), sewerage connection by Housing Department. Or be it issuance of Income certificate, Character, Unemployment, Legal Heir, Dependency, SC/ST/OBC/RBA/EWS/PSP/IB/ALC certificates by Tehsildar besides attestation of mutations by him all are provided over this single interface.

Moreover, applications regarding obtaining of Marriage Assistance, financial assistance under Ladli Beti, and several pensions by the Social welfare department could now be accomplished from this digital platform.

The statistics of response received on the platform reveals 128857 applications were received for above services. Out of these 115135 certificates already stands issued digitally with just 13722 applications under process.

The monitoring is done at each level to ensure all the services are delivered as per the timelines fixed under J&K Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA).

The interface is user-friendly as it has been created with an aim to make all Government services accessible to the common man at the click of a button and ensure efficiency, transparency, responsiveness and reliability of such services to realize the basic needs of the common man.

Citizens need to first register and apply for any service by filling an application form and will receive an output certificate/report as the service deliverables in the portal itself.

Marking a remarkable achievement in the digital journey of Jammu and Kashmir, e-Unnat provides a window to the government to get feedback from citizens on any subject related to service delivery, its quality for further improvement.

The platform is integrated with Rapid Assessment System (RAS) that gives users an opportunity to give their feedback about their experience of using the service.

Further the platform has been fully integrated with the national portal 'Meri Pehchan' for more fruitful access and availability. It has also been synchronised with Digi Locker, UMANG app, SMS/e-Payment gateway for the overall comfort and ease of the users. It will usher in freedom from running to government offices and will provide strength to the dream of making JK fully digital.



Preparations underway for holding Assembly elections in J&K

THE DELIMITATION HAS BEEN COMPLETED. THE ELECTORAL ROLLS REVISION IS ON AND IS LIKELY TO BE COMPLETED SOON. The EC has set October 31 as the final date for publication of the revised electoral rolls...

Srinagar: The election machinery is gearing up for the conduct of Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir as the first-level checking (FLC) of EVMs and VVPATs will be held at a workshop here later this month, officials said on Sunday.

They said deputy commissioners of all 10 districts of the Valley and a team of the Election Commission of India (ECI) will participate in the workshop.

“The preparations for the assembly elections are underway. However, the final dates for the conduct of the polls will be decided by the ECI,” an official said.

Jammu and Kashmir has been without an Assembly since November 2018 when the then Legislative Assembly was dissolved by then Governor Satya Pal Malik after the PDP-BJP coalition government fell apart earlier that year.

The Centre as well as the Lieutenant Governor administration here have been saying that the Assembly elections in the UT would be conducted after the process of delimitation and electoral revision is completed.

The delimitation of constituencies was completed earlier this year and the Election Commission began the process of electoral rolls revision in the union territory last month — an exercise taking place after a gap of three years and for the first time since the abrogation of J&K’s special status in August 2019.

The officials said there are indications that polls could be held in the UT after the electoral rolls revision is completed.

They said the preparations for the polls were in full swing.

“The delimitation has been completed. The electoral rolls revision is on and is likely to be completed soon. The EC has set October 31 as the final date for publication of the revised electoral rolls,” the official said.

The process of rationalisation of polling stations was also going

on and is likely to be completed by the end of this month.

“Some of the deputy commissioners who are designated as district election officers have released a list of draft polling stations after rationalisation, while others are in the process of doing so,” the official said.

The rationalisation of polling stations was necessitated because of the creation of seven new assembly constituencies as well as change in boundaries of many constituencies following fresh delimitation.

The officials said the district election officers have been holding meetings with the representatives of political parties in every district.

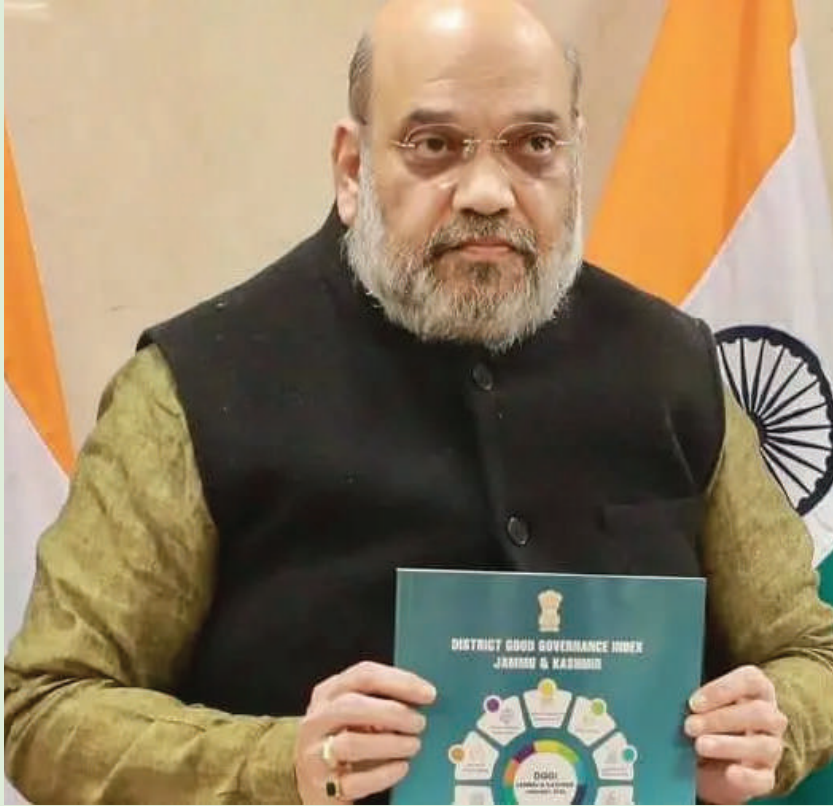
Discussions have taken place with these representatives of political parties on the post-delimitation exercises, including rationalisation of polling stations, list of draft polling stations after formation of new constituencies, addition and deletion of voters in the list, they said.

After this process is completed, the officials said, the booth-level officers (BLOs) would be trained and sensitised regarding the post-delimitation exercise.

Meanwhile, a workshop on first-level checking (FLC) of EVMs and VVPATs will be held at SKICC here on July 27, in which the district election officers and deputy district election officers of all the 10 districts of the valley will be participating.

A team of officers from the Election Commission of India, including Director EVMs, S Sunder Rajan, Secretary Madhusudan Gupta and Under Secretary O P Sahani, besides, representatives from Electronics Corporation of India Ltd, including Deputy General Manager P C Mandal, Technical Officer C V Dinesh Datta and Officer C Venkanna, are also participating in the workshop, the officials said.

J&K registers hike of 3.7 percent in GGI from 2019 to 2021



SRINAGAR: The Good Governance Index (GGI)-2021 indicated that Jammu and Kashmir has registered an increase of 3.7 percent in Good Governance Indicators over the 2019 to 2021 period.

Over the past 2 years, the DARPG has successfully collaborated with Government of Jammu & Kashmir in adoption of e-Office, capacity building programs for JKAS officers, as well as integration of JK-IGRAMS with District Portals. DARPG also conducted three regional conferences on replication of good governance practices in Jammu and Kashmir.

The District Good Governance Index of Jammu & Kashmir was released virtually by the Union Home Minister, Amit Shah in presence of Union Minister Jitendra Singh and the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Sinha.

The index represents a significant milestone in realizing this vision of Prime Minister for next Generation Administrative Reforms.

Strong performances were witnessed in Commerce and Industry, Agriculture and allied sectors, Public Infrastructure & Utilities, Judiciary and Public Safety sectors. Significant improvements were reported in Ease of Doing Business, Tax collection, Skill trainings imparted, connectivity to rural habitations, Economic empowerment of women, Health insurance coverage and Housing for all. There were improvements in conviction rates, disposal of court cases and proportion of women police personnel. Citizen Centric Governance sector witnessed a strong performance.

In this backdrop of strong governance performance at National level, the Government of Jammu & Kashmir's initiative of benchmarking governance at District level assumes considerable significance.

The District Good Governance Index has helped to identify impact of various governance interventions at district level and provide a futuristic roadmap for improving district level governance with targeted interventions.

According to the report, Jammu topped the J&K's first-ever District Good Governance Index (DGGI). Doda district came second on the list, followed by Samba, Pulwama, and Srinagar.

The DGGI is a framework document comprising of performance under ten governance sectors having 58 indicators with 116 data points.

The criteria was adopted after following a rigorous and robust process of data collection, screening, and validation by each of the Districts.

The governance sectors, performance of which was weighed under this index, includes Agriculture and allied sector (11 indicators), Commerce & Industry (05), Human Resource Development (09), Public Health (09), Public Infrastructure & Utilities (06), Social Welfare & Development (06), Financial Inclusion (03), Judiciary & Public Safety (04), Environment (02) and Citizen-Centric Governance (03).

Digi Pay Sakhi scheme providing financial access to remote areas with transparency in J&K

SRINAGAR: The government of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday said that Digi Pay Sakhi Scheme is providing financial access to the people of remote areas of Union Territory with greater transparency.

"The people belonging to the village areas now are able to take the benefit of the additional banking and financial services. It is one of the initiatives that has been started by the Prime Minister to take banking services to the doorstep of the people," said a government official.

In an endeavour to promote door-to-door digital banking and financial services in remote areas of Jammu Kashmir, J&K

Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM) has trained 125 women from Self Help Groups as DIGI-Pay Sakhis in 2000 villages under Mission 'One Gram Panchayat-One DIGI-Pay Sakhi'.

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

Lieutenant Governor, during the launch of Mission 'One Gram Panchayat-One DIGI-Pay Sakhi' in the UT last year distributed 80 Aadhaar Enabled Pay-

ment Systems (AEPs) among the DIGI-Pay Sakhis under JKRLM.

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

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



e-UNNAT Portal

A Single interface to citizens for accessing all **GOVERNMENT SERVICES**



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GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
pmaojana.com



HOUSING & URBAN DEVELOPMENT



TRANSPORT



REVENUE



ESTATE



SOCIAL WELFARE

e-Unnat: one-stop solution for all govt services

It is no more a dream for youngsters to avail government services at the cozy comforts of their homes. They always aspired for using the power of technology to access and avail services provided by different departments of the UT. Being tech-savvy they always envisioned of the system that is in consonance with their wishes and aspirations. They wanted to use the gadgets in their hands to reach where they had to spend days wandering in the corridors of government offices.

It was a change they had envisioned. It was only a bleak, far-off idea they used to crave for. It was their desire. A hope to realize their innate potential. An easy opportunity to fill colours in their dreams. That also without having to tire themselves in the labyrinthine alleys of offices and departments.

Then a system took shape that truly sensed the needs and aspirations of these youngsters. It foresaw what these youngsters were harboring for years. Those at helm took it upon themselves to materialize what was immaterial for all these years. They started working on all these deliverable and dedicating the same to public one by one. This new dispensation embarked on the path of less government more governance.

It is in this pursuit the LG, Manoj Sinha's able administration powered by an efficient team of officers lead by Chief Secretary, Dr Arun Kumar Mehta worked day in and day out to bring paperless and corruption free administration at the doorsteps of people. The recent launching of unified, single digital platform called e-Unnat for availing much of the significant government services is an instance favoring the same. The e-portal that can be accessed by logging into eunnat.jk.gov.in is an integrated web address developed here giving citizens access to some 107 services provided by various departments.

From this single interface a one-time registration gives a person access to all these services and provisions. Be it registration of birth or death, obtaining NOC for installing the mobile tower, street vending license, registration of dairy farm/Gaushalla, road cutting permission, permission for

trade fair (Mela), sewerage connection by Housing Department. Or be it issuance of Income certificate, Character, Unemployment, Legal Heir, Dependency, SC/ST/OBC/RBA/EWS/PSP/IB/ALC certificates by Tehsildar besides attestation of mutations by him all are provided over this single interface.

Moreover, applications regarding obtaining of Marriage Assistance, financial assistance under Ladli Beti, and several pensions by the Social welfare department could now be accomplished from this digital platform.

During these days the platform has received 128857 applications for above services. Out of these 115135 certificates already stands issued digitally with just 13722 applications under process. The monitoring is done at each level to ensure all the services are delivered as per the timelines fixed under J&K Public Services Guarantee Act (PSGA).

The interface is user-friendly as it has been created with an aim to make all Government services accessible to the common man at the click of a button and ensure efficiency, transparency, responsiveness and reliability of such services to realize the basic needs of the common man. Citizens need to first register and apply for any service by filling an application form and will receive an output certificate/report as the service deliverables in the portal itself.

Marking a remarkable achievement in the digital journey of Jammu and Kashmir, e-Unnat provides a window to the government to get feedback from citizens on any subject related to service delivery, its quality for further improvement. The platform is integrated with Rapid Assessment System (RAS) that gives users an opportunity to give their feedback about their experience of using the service.

Further, the platform has been fully integrated with the national portal 'Meri Pehchan' for more fruitful access and availability. It has also been synchronised with Digi Locker, UMANG app, SMS/e-Payment gateway for the overall comfort and ease of the users. It will usher in freedom from running to government offices and will provide strength to the dream of making JK fully digital.



Edu sector of J&K makes landmark strides by effective implementation of schemes & projects

‘25k seats added with establishment of 50 new colleges in one year, making it largest seat addition in last 70 years’

SRINAGAR: The government of Jammu and Kashmir has said that education sector of UT has made landmark strides in last few years by effectively implementing all schemes and projects envisaging a notable improvement in the existing curriculum besides embarking upon various innovative new projects and works.

“With an aim to reform the educational ecosystem and infrastructure across Jammu and Kashmir, the largest single addition of education capacity in 70 years was done with the addition of new 25000 seats in 50 new colleges in one year only. The focus of the Government has been value-based education; creating an environment for individual growth apart from scientific and technological knowledge. The education sector in UT is being reformed to meet the requirements of the rapidly transforming education system and the changing market dynamics,” said a government official.

“The shift in the curriculum at University and Colleges can have a decisive impact on the socio-economic environment of J&K. The department is working to create a perfect balance between students and teachers for shaping the young minds through a value-based knowledge system,” the government said.

Speaking at a book launch function organised by NAAC in collaboration with the Central University of Kashmir (CUK), Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said that the Universities and Colleges have immense power and a small shift in curricu-

lum can have a decisive impact on the socio-economic environment.

Highlighting the need to introduce new reforms to meet the requirements of the rapidly transforming education system and the changing market dynamics, the Lieutenant Governor said, “The University and Colleges have immense power and a small shift in the curriculum can have a decisive impact on the socio-economic environment.”

Manoj Sinha has said that the administration is paying ‘sustained attention’ to bring quality education to the underprivileged section of the society who were long deprived of their rights. “With implementation of NEP, national pattern of syllabus followed by other states and Union Territories will be introduced in Jammu and Kashmir. Syllabus and format approved by the University Grants Commission (UGC) will be applicable in the UT,” he said.

“Be it in terms of syllabus, study formats, educational courses, exam pattern etc, Jammu and Kashmir will not only implement the National Education Policy but will become at par with national standards,” he added.

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

In Jammu and Kashmir, 16 colleges have been finalized for option of Skill Development Programme along with Under Graduation courses.

The New Education Policy contains features of equity, quality, affordability, accountability and promotes individual development through experience based education and logical thinking. The policy aims to recognize, identify and foster the unique capabilities of each student by sensitizing teachers as well as parents to promote each student’s holistic development in both academic and non-academic spheres.

Rs 1,600cr project for flood management in J&K approved

AC gives nod to renaming directorates of Social Welfare Department

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Council on Friday accorded administrative approval of Rs 1,623 crore for flood management of river Jhelum and its tributaries.

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

The project intends to protect flood-prone areas along the river in at least six districts.

“The Administrative Council, which met here under the chairmanship of Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, accorded administrative approval to the Jhelum flood protection works by Jal Shakti Department in Kashmir division,” an official spokesperson said.

It approved the project — Comprehensive Plan for River Jhelum and its tributaries, Phase (II) Part (A) — amounting to Rs 1,623.43 crore under the Prime Minister’s Development Package, he said.

The proposed works are based on the existing site conditions and issues of the main Jhelum downstream of Sangam up to Wullar Lake, flood spill channel and outfall channel, including tributaries, in order to safely mitigate a flood threat of 1,700 cubic metres (60,000 cusecs).

The project comprises various components, including improvement in the discharge carrying capacity of river Jhelum, bank and toe protection works, raising of bunds and embankments, and re-sectioning and channel improvement of the river.

Regulation of silt input from tributaries by anti-erosion works are also proposed at critical spots.

The other works under the project comprise rejuvenating water bodies such as Hokersar and Nowgham by re-sectioning of the cunnettes and inside channels, and construction of inlet and exit regulat-

ing gates, the spokesperson said.

The project intends to protect flood-prone areas along the Jhelum in Srinagar, Budgam, Baramulla, Anantnag, Pulwama and Bandipora districts, and will generate 1.19 crore man-days employment for skilled workers and 3.81 crore man-days employment for unskilled workers, respectively. It will be completed in three years, he added.

The project was conceptualised on the basis of recommendations made by a three-member group headed by the chairman of the Central Water Commission, which was constituted shortly after the September 2014 floods on the instructions of the prime minister.

The AC also approved the change of nomenclature of Directorates in the Social Welfare Department.

The decision has been made to rename the Mission Directorate, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS); Mission Directorate, Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS); and State Resource Centre for Women (SRCW) as Directorate Mission Poshan; Directorate Mission Vatsalya; and Directorate Mission Shakti, respectively, an official spokesman said.

He said the decision will streamline the implementation of various social welfare schemes in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, besides, bringing them in consonance with the new umbrella schemes of the Government of India. Accordingly, various schemes of the Ministry of Women & Child Development, GoI will be re-distributed among the three Directorates.

Now, the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Scheme for Adolescent Girls, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana, National Crèche Scheme will be implemented by the Directorate of Poshan Abhiyan, whereas, the Integrated Child Protection Services (ICPS) and services under the Juvenile Justice Act will be implemented by the Directorate of Mission Vatsalya, he said.

Similarly, the Directorate of Mission Shakti will be implementing the schemes including One Stop Centre/Women’s Helpline (181), Swadhar Greh, Widow Homes, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, and other women welfare schemes for women empowerment with a special focus on gender budgeting, research, and assistance to working women, the spokesman further said.





AB-PMJAY SEHAT TO PROVIDE GOLDEN CARDS TO JKRLM ASSOCIATED 5 LAKH WOMEN, THEIR FAMILIES

SRINAGAR: Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) SEHAT scheme would cover five lakh women and their families who are associated with self-help groups of Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM) to pace up 100% saturation in J&K.

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) SEHAT Scheme is emerging as a ray of hope for poor families who couldn't afford health treatment at prestigious and well-known medical institutes of the country.

Chief Executive Officer Ayushman Bharat, Ayushi Sudan emphasised the need for IEC activities, and directed the concerned to create mass awareness among the people so that more and more people get registered for SEHAT scheme.

She urged the officers to ensure that no one is left without a golden card during the Special drives so that they are entitled to the benefits of Golden Card.

Ayushi Sudan also said that the department will continue to organise special drives in till every citizen is covered under this scheme.

Speaking about the roping in of JKRLM, she said that these workers have set out for entrepreneurship journey and the health of their families needs to be taken care of under the scheme.

To provide much-needed relief to the people of J&K, the SEHAT Scheme was launched in convergence with AB-PMJAY by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) SEHAT Scheme in Jammu and Kashmir provides health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year to all the residents at empanelled hospitals. The scheme covers up to three days of pre-hospitalization and fifteen days of post-hospitalization expenses including diagnostics and medicines.

Under the initiative of 'Gaon Gaon Ayushman, State Health Agency (SHA) has also started' to reach out to even last mile villages which remain cut from the rest of the world due to adverse weather conditions so as to percolate the benefits of the scheme down to every beneficiary.

Notably, to ensure hassle-free registration of all eligible beneficiaries under the scheme, the State Health Agency has set up a network of more than 8000 Common Service Centres (CSCs) in Jammu and Kashmir. The virtual learning environment (VLE) Centres are also being stationed in villages for ensuring 100% registration and awareness activities at the grassroots level in association with PRIs and ASHA workers.

Recently Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana State Health Agency organised a special week-long drive for Mandi traders in Srinagar, Jammu for registration and generation of Golden cards.

The registration drive was also organised by State Health Agency in collaboration with SMC aimed to bring every sanitation worker of SMC under the health care safety net.

J&K Govt to ensure friendly access to public facilities and places to specially-abled

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today distributed Motorized Tricycles for the specially-abled persons here at Raj Bhavan.

In the first phase, the government is distributing 1000 units of Motorized Tricycles and by the end of the current financial year, 3000 additional units will be distributed among eligible beneficiaries.

Reiterating Government's commitment to serve disadvantaged sections of the society, LG said, our endeavour is to make accessibility a right for specially-abled and ensure a barrier-free environment and friendly access to public facilities and places.

Various schemes launched by the government aim to achieve the vision of building an inclusive society by empowering socially, economically marginalized sections, creation of livelihood and skilling initiatives for youth and adequate support to senior citizens, he added.

Sinha expressed gratitude to Prime Minister for introducing revolutionary reforms to empower the Divyangjan by granting them their due rights, besides extending benefits of social welfare schemes.

Initiatives like Accessible India Campaign have ensured accessible infrastructure for specially abled, in government and private buildings, railway stations, airports, schools and colleges, added the

LG.

On the occasion the Lt Governor also acknowledged the key role of voluntary organizations and District Administrations in creating an enabling environment for the specially abled persons to lead a dignified life.

He directed the Social Welfare Department to double their efforts for ensuring 100% saturation of beneficiary oriented schemes and chalk-out a comprehensive plan of action to extend all necessary support and assistance to specially-abled persons for their sustainable livelihood.

The Lt Governor further advised the officials for notifying a toll free number to receive feedback from the beneficiaries regarding the implementation of the welfare schemes.

Sheetal Nanda, Commissioner Secretary to Government, Social Welfare Department briefed the Lt Governor on the measures taken for implementation of various UT and Centrally Sponsored schemes.

The J&K Rehabilitation Council, Social Welfare Department with the approved allocation of Rs.8.00 Crores procured 1000 units of Motorized Tricycles which are being distributed among eligible beneficiaries across the J&K UT, it was informed.

AC enhances ex-gratia relief for local defence personnel

Approves strengthening of Medical infrastructure in Rajouri, Kathua

Srinagar: The Administrative Council (AC) which met here under the chairmanship of the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, today approved the enhancement of ex-gratia relief to the next-of-kin (NoK) of defence force personnel, hailing from J&K, who attain martyrdom either in or outside J&K.

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

An official spokesman said that the AC approved the enhancement of ex-gratia relief from Rs. 5.00 lacs to Rs. 25.00 lacs in favour of NoK of those Defence Personnel who hail from J&K and attain martyrdom within the territorial jurisdiction of the UT of Jammu & Kashmir.

Similarly, the AC also sanctioned ex-gratia relief of Rs. 25.00 lacs in favour of NoK of those Defence Personnel hailing from Jammu & Kashmir, who attain martyrdom in consequence of official duties outside J&K/ within the country.

"These provisions will be made effective from 01.02.2022 and will remove the disparity between relief provisions in J&K and other States/UTs. The decision will also boost the morale of the soldiers who hail from J&K and are serving in adverse weather and terrain conditions," said the spokesman.

The AC also accorded administrative approval to the proposal of the Jammu Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (JMRDA) for improvement/upgradation of the road network and allied infrastructure at Transport Nagar, Narwal, Jammu.

The Administrative Council approved the improvement/upgradation of the road network and allied infrastructure at Transport Nagar, Narwal, Jammu at an estimated cost of Rs. 33.57 Crore. The project will be completed in 12 months, the spokesman said.

The project aims at decongesting the area, facilitating users in hassle-free movement, and improving the economic/commercial activities by providing proper facilities both in terms of road/drain network and other amenities, said the spokesman.

The improvement/upgradation works will include laying of thick bituminous macadamization; surface drainage; factory-made chamfered concrete paver blocks; and internal roads of 7.50 Mtr width including intersection of major roads, over lean concrete, cement concrete, and RCC drain along the sides of major roads, he said.

The AC also approved proposal of Health and Medical Education Department to construct a 100-bedded Mother & Child Health Care Hospital at Lamberi Rajouri,

The sanctioned hospital will be constructed under National Health Mission (NHM) at an estimated cost of Rs. 47.232 Crore and will be completed by 2024-25, said the spokesman.

The new 100 Bedded Mother & Child Care Hospital will be equipped with facilities for emergency ward, OPD, IPD and operation theatres. Apart from MCH services, the hospital will also provide general healthcare and accidental services to the common masses besides serving the emergent health needs of tourists & pilgrims, he said.

Being centrally placed, the MCH will serve a large population of Rajouri and Poonch districts and will also serve as accidental hospital on the Jammu-Poonch National Highway.

The Administrative Council also approved up-gradation of the 30-bedded Community Health Centre at Billawar, Kathua to a 100-bedded Sub-District Hospital at an estimated cost of Rs. 28.18 crore. The project will be completed in financial year 2023-24, the spokesman said.

The project will strengthen the healthcare services of the area and help increase life expectancy and decrease IMR/ MMR in the region, besides meeting the long pending demand of the common masses of Billawar, Kathua and will also create more employment opportunities both for operationalization of the project and by way of development of additional support services around the project area, added the spokesman.



'AAO SCHOOL CHALEIN': KASHMIR SCHOOLS WITNESS 19.02% HIKE IN STUDENT ENROLLMENT

SRINAGAR: Reflecting the improvement in education standards of Government schools, student enrolment in government-run schools has increased by more than 19.02 percent in the ongoing academic year in Kashmir, said a government official.

In recent years, School Education Department has recorded an unprecedented thrust, particularly in the elementary segment. The Samagra Shiksha has come as a boon, unleashing a series of initiatives seeking universal enrolment and retention, reduction of social, regional and gender gaps, mainstreaming of the children with special needs and promotion of quality parameters.

As per official figures, the highest percentage of new admissions was recorded in South Kashmir's Kulgam district wherein the student enrolment has increased by 19.2 percent.

"Before the enrollment drive, there were a total of 44,559 students enrolled in government-run-schools. However, after the drive, the district has recorded new 10,156 admissions," official data reveals. Similarly, south Kashmir's Anantnag district recorded a hike in student enrolment by 21.78 percent. The district has also witnessed 19,436 new admissions this academic session.

Likewise, in Bandipora district student enrolment increased by 8.9 percent followed by Central Kashmir's Ganderbal district with 5.3 percent, frontier district Kupwara with 19.2 percent, Baramulla with 17.8 percent, Shopian with 3.8 percent, Pulwama with 4.8 percent and Srinagar with 3.3 percent.

Earlier the situation was different as the net enrolment ratio was at the lowest at both elementary and secondary levels in government schools in J&K as per the School Quality Education Index (SEQI) 2019 report of the National Institute for

Transforming India (NITI) Aayog.

Various initiatives launched by the school education department attracted students from private to Government schools. More so, over 1.50 Lakh Teachers were covered under elementary teacher training, 126 CAL (Computer Aided Learning) Centers were set up in the Upper Primary Schools and 13000 disabled children were provided medical aid and assistive devices.

"Free textbooks are provided to students of 1st to 8th standards each year. Seasonal Centers at various Bahaks (highland pasture's) were established for the children of the migratory population besides NRBC centres were established for out-of-school children (drop out or never enrolled)," official data reveals. Other major interventions like extension of Mid-day Meal scheme to middle schools has tremendously helped in increasing the enrollment of these schools.

The SED has also enrolled around 1143 school dropouts in schools afresh besides enrolling 965 Children With Special Needs (CWSN) and 28295 students have switched from private schools to government schools.

Under the Special Enrollment Drive "AAO SCHOOL CHALEIN", 118176 students were enrolled in government schools of Jammu and Kashmir during the winter session. The drive emphasized on the strengthening of the pre-schooling of children in the age group of 3 to 5 years with a focus on increasing overall enrollment in government schools by re-enrolment of dropout students and the children who have never been enrolled in school.

The School Education Department (SED) is holding hold door-to-door campaigns to enhance learner enrollment across the schools in Jammu and Kashmir.

PMDP projects witnessing tremendous progress since 2019

29 projects already completed

SRINAGAR: The government of Jammu and Kashmir has said that the Central Government-funded projects under the Prime Minister Development Package (PMDP) which were languishing or were being executed at snail's pace are witnessing tremendous progress since 2019.

“Out of a total of 53 projects sanctioned at a cost of Rs 58,477 crore under the PMDP, 29 projects have already been completed or substantially completed. Among these projects, 18 projects are under the jurisdiction of the Government of India and 35 under the Government of J&K,” said a government official.

As per official details, twelve more projects will be completed during the current financial year and another six projects are likely to be completed by end of 2023.

Central Government is providing unstinting support in accelerating the pace of development in Jammu and Kashmir which has resulted in the rapid transformation of the entire Union Territory on all fronts.

The transformation in each sector has brought economic stability, enabling the UT to march toward a golden future as the government is making every effort to ensure that the benefits of development reach all sections of society.

According to officials, from 2015 to 2020, only 7 projects were completed out of 53 but in the last two years over 22 projects have been fully/substantially completed. According to a parliamentary committee report, the J&K Government has informed the panel that as of December 2019, around 46 percent of funds have been spent under the package while seven projects have already been completed.

The PM's package was announced on 7 November 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi involving an outlay of Rs 80,068 crore. The Reconstruction Plan essentially rests on five Pillars- Humanitarian Relief, Crisis Management, Social Infrastructure Development Projects and Economic Infrastructure. The Reconstruction Plan aims at expanding economic infrastructure, expanding provision of basic services, providing thrust to employment and income generation and providing relief and rehabilitation to the victims of

September, 2014 floods and strengthening the Disaster Management Framework of the J&K.

This involves humanitarian relief to the affected families of September 2014, floods in the form of enhanced ex-gratia relief for reconstruction of houses; assistance for rehabilitation of livelihoods in the form of interest subvention for traders/self employed/business establishments etc.; rehabilitation Package for one time Settlement of displaced persons of PoK and Chhamb and provision of transit accommodation and additional jobs for the Kashmiri migrants.

Similarly, under Crisis management component which costs Rs 5858 crs, includes undertaking a Comprehensive Flood Control Project for River Jhelum and its tributaries including dredging and de-silting; assistance for permanent restoration of damaged public infrastructure assets; assistance under World Bank assisted Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery project; strengthening the Disaster Management Framework in the State, including setting up of EOCs and allied infrastructure etc.

In the social infrastructure component creation of two AIIMs like institutions for health care in J&K; stepping up of support for creation of infrastructure in District Hospitals; Sub District hospitals and PHCs was decided besides the establishment of IIM, Jammu; IIT Jammu; 1,00,000 youth to be trained for self-employment and wage employment placement linked skilled training under HIMAYAT scheme; construction of indoor and outdoor stadiums to encourage sports persons and to increase the economic activity in the region.

The fourth component involves action on projects in sectors relating to tourism, agriculture, horticulture and urban development and funding for externally aided projects etc.

The Economic Infrastructure component includes taking up major projects in sectors such as Power, Road, Transport and Highways, Urban Development such as Pakal Dul HEP, Srinagar-Leh 220 KV Transmission line; two Pilot Solar Power projects in Leh and Kargil; funds for the Power sector Reforms; funds for augmentation of T&D System; preparation of DPRs and implementation/installation of Small Hydro Projects, four laning and improvement of different sections of Jammu-Srinagar Highway; five projects for improving road Connectivity in the State under Bharat Mala; Improving Urban infrastructure in the Capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar etc.



J&K government responds to BRAP 2020 rankings

SRINAGAR: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday said that the UT has come long way in establishing investment ecosystem in last more than one year. "A multi-pronged plan has been put in place to transform Kashmir into an investment hub in North India."

In the recently released BRAP 2020 report by Union Finance Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman on 30th June 2022, Jammu and Kashmir has been listed in Emerging Business Ecosystems (EBEs) category along with Bihar, Chandigarh, Delhi, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura, Puducherry, among others. The assessment for BRAP 2020 does not reflect the true picture as on-ground today since the rankings are for reforms taken in 2020 during which the UT was initiating the process of industrialization after the historic administrative changes in August 2019.

J&K Governments investment initiatives like investment promotion, transparent and robust land allotment process, best-in-class incentives, Single Window System for smooth clearances with

dedicated teams to attend to investor has led to a strong impetus for investment across various sectors. There has been a fundamental shift in the policy as well as the implementation.

UT has come a long way in creating an enabling and entrepreneurial-friendly environment that will facilitate the sustainable growth and development of industrial enterprises.

Jammu and Kashmir is in fact poised on the cusp of a massive economic push with record investment proposals worth Rs 55,000 crore under consideration. More than 215 services are being provided online with UT of J&K becoming first UT to be integrated with National Single Window System.

With a robust single window system in place, more than 215 services online, 1977 burdensome compliances reduced and 1100+ more to be reduced by 15 Aug 2022, J&K is all set for a quantum leap in proposed BRAP 2022 reforms under DPIIT expected to be released by February 2023.

Woolen industry witnessing massive revamp across J&K

SRINAGAR: J&K Government is devising a viable framework to give a massive revamp to Woollen industry across Jammu and Kashmir.

The reformative policies of the UT Government are providing economic growth opportunities to around 50,000 families associated with woollen industry in J&K.

To give boost to this sector, a Showroom cum Interpretation Centre at Government Woollen Mill, Bemina was established under the World Bank funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTRFP) which was recently inaugurated by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha. The showroom will provide a direct Market for 80,000 Kgs of locally produced wool annually, benefiting around 1600 sheep rearing families.

The new Showroom cum Interpretation Centre will greatly impact the livelihood opportunities of people working in the mill, besides providing market opportunities for the thousands of wool-producing farmers of J&K.

Notably, J&K is the 2nd largest producer of wool in the country, producing approximately 70 lakh kgs of wool per annum.

"J&K Industry has tie-up with e-commerce platform 'Amazon' through Silk Mark Organisation of India (SMOI) as e-marketing channel. Registration on GeM portal was completed and Professional catalogues and brochures were also developed," an official said. "Reputed designers are being roped in to develop new product range in line with present market trends and fashions," he added.

Notably, wool is the only natural fibre in which the nation is deficient. A proper processing, grading, marketing, and value addition will turn around fortunes for farmers dealing with it.

Domestic production of wool in the country is not adequate and the industry is dependent on imports. The wool import to the nation stands at 77 million Kgs per year.

In a recent meeting chaired on revival of wool industry in J&K, Additional Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, said that the considerable wool production amalgamated with the installation of processing units would result in bolstering the economy of UT.

Whole Lung Lavage performed first time in J&K for treatment of rare lung disease

SRINAGAR: The therapeutic procedure Whole Lung Lavage (WLL) has been performed for the first time in Jammu and Kashmir for management of a rare lung disease.

The procedure was performed by a combined effort from Departments of Pulmonary Medicine and Anaesthesia of Government Medical College, Srinagar.

A male patient, 50, who presented with a one-month history of shortness of breath on exertion and was found to have low oxygen saturation (60% on room air). On evaluation at CD Hospital with the help from Cincinnati Children's centre (USA) diagnosis of primary Pulmonary Alveolar Proteinosis was made. Pulmonary alveolar proteinosis is a rare lung disorder with an estimated prevalence of 0.2 -0.6 cases per 100000 individuals.

The disease is characterised by accumulation of milk-like proteinaceous material in the Lung sacs affecting gas exchange and resulting in hypoxemia (low oxygen saturation). WLL is considered the standard of care for management of this rare disorder.

The procedure was successfully performed over three hours using 15 litres of sterile normal saline (to wash out the lung) in the theatre of Chest diseases hospital.

The team of Interventional Pulmonologists lead by of H.O.D Pulmonary Medicine Prof Dr Naveed Nazir Shah consisted of Prof Khursheed Ahmad Dar, Dr Muhammad Yousuf Dar, Dr Firdous Manzoor, Dr Tajamul Hussain, Dr Zubair, Dr Hina, Dr Aliya, Dr Shah Nawaz, Dr Naeem, Dr Mehwish, Dr Tahir, Dr Shahid, Dr Zaid, Dr Asiralong with theatre team of CD hospital Gulzar and Hilal.

The anaesthesia team consisted of Dr Mushtaq and Dr Messam under the guidance of H.O.D anaesthesia Prof Rukhsana Najeeb with assistance from Hilal, Younis and Farooq.

The relatives of the patient expressed their happiness and extended gratitude to the whole team.

By performing this procedure CD hospital has become only one of the few centres in the whole country where this procedure has been performed.



J&K receives 338 proposals in Bio-Tech sector under New Industrial Scheme

SRINAGAR: J&K Government on Monday said that it has received 338 proposals associated with the biotech sector which is emerging as a priority sector after the launch of new Industrial Development Scheme.

“With new Biotech capabilities and innovation, Jammu and Kashmir, bestowed with more than 3,500 medicinal plant species, will be able to harness market advantages in the most effective way and help the farmers to generate more income. The establishment of organic-based and pharmaceutical companies will be successful in linking the abundant natural wealth of J&K neglected for decades with the industry,” said a government official.

Lt. Governor, Manoj Sinha said that the inauguration of Industrial Biotech Park in Kathua will transform the economy and enable scientists to tackle challenges of climate change. “The enabling infrastructure will fuel a new wave of innovation and impact various sectors, from health and agriculture to cosmetics and materials,” he observed.

“Together with advances in Data Analytics, Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, Biotech Park will accelerate change,” he said. At North India’s first Industrial Biotech Park, the Lieutenant Governor said that it will be a vital futuristic asset of Agri-Horticulture Entrepreneurs, Start-up Entrepreneurs, Researchers, Youth Entrepreneurs and Scientists of the region.

He impressed upon the scientists of the industrial Biotech Park, Kathua and the researchers of SKUAST to collaborate on tissue culture and molecular diagnostics of new variety of plants. “Our goal is

to integrate agriculture and allied sectors completely with biotech so that the whole time cycle of crop production can be streamlined and made beneficial for the farmers,” he said.

The new Industrial Biotech Park at Kathua will provide Startups, Young Entrepreneurs and SMEs the tools that can make production cheaper, manageable and environmentally sustainable.

Biotech Park would act as hub for incubation of new ideas and will act as a robust platform to support the agri-entrepreneurs, start-ups, 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. 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.

Another under-construction Biotech Park at Handwara is coming up at a cost of Rs 84.66 Crore, shared between the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India and Science and Technology Department of the UT Government.

Notably, to attract women scientists and to provide employment opportunities to the unemployed women scientists, DST and DBT in the Union Ministry of Science & Technology have special schemes. The number of Biotech Start-Ups in the country has increased from 50 to over 5,000 in the last 8 years, because of the support and enabling milieu provided by Prime Minister Narendra Modi since 2014. It is expected to cross the figure of 10,000 by 2025. India is ranked 12th in the world in biotech, 3rd in Asia-pacific and the largest vaccine manufacturer in the world.

JKERA develops web-based tools for forecasting of HydroMet Hazards



Detailed demonstration of the web-based tools of DSS, IOFS, DRDB developed under the Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project was also made before the Secretary, DMRRR and other officers of the Dept.

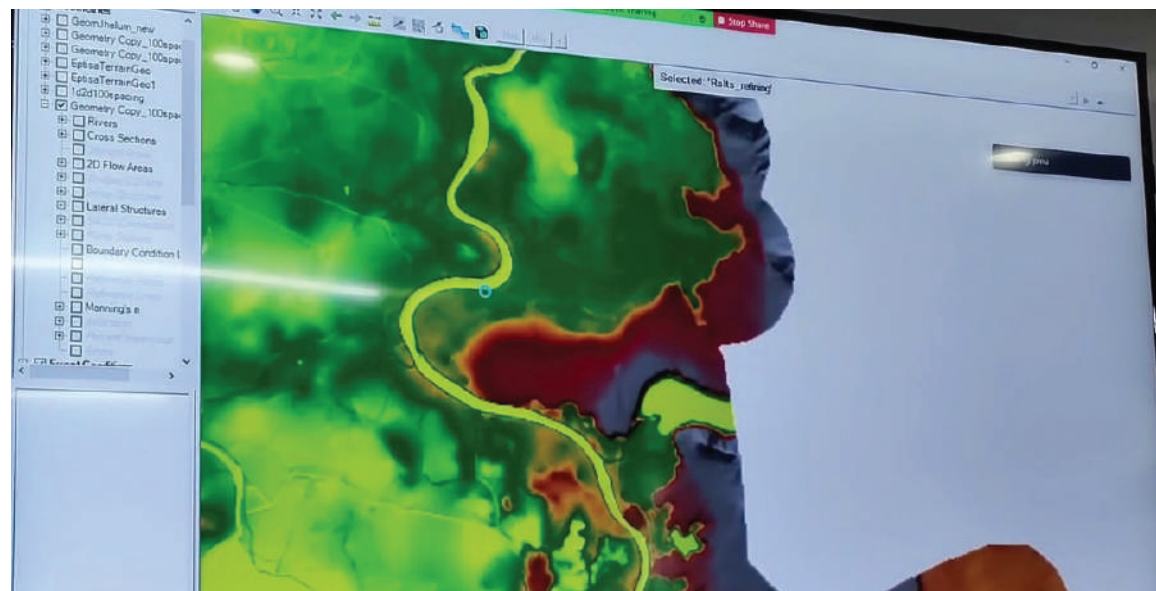
SRINAGAR: The State of Art Web-based tools which include the DSS (Decision Support System) DRDB (Disaster Risk Database) and IOFS (Integrated Operational Forecasting System) developed by J&K ERA under the World Bank-funded Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project for the Strengthening of Disaster Management and Mitigation in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.

The tools have been handed over by the J&K Economic Reconstruction Agency to the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (DMRRR).

The Project Management Unit of Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project led by Er. Iftikhar Hakim, Director Planning and Coordination, JTFRP handed over the web-based tools of DSS, DRDB and IOFS to Nazim Zai Khan, Secretary DMRRR. The reports on MHRA (Multihazard Risk Assessment in J&K & Ladakh) and DSS conducted by the Project Management Unit of JTFRP under the World Bank-funded project were also shared on the occasion.

Detailed demonstration of the web-based tools of DSS, IOFS, DRDB developed under the Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project was also made before the Secretary, DMRRR and other officers of the Dept.

Secretary DMRRR appreciated the efforts made by JKERA for having undertaken the development of latest scientific web-based applications under the World Bank funded project He also asked the officers of the DMRRR to immediately migrate to these applications so that the DMRRR, UTDMA (UT level Disaster



Management Authority) and DDMA's (District Disaster Management Authorities) are able to fully benefit from these applications.

DSS is software for developing better two-way communication between the different stakeholders that help them to effectively use the resources for the emergency response and Disaster Management, it equips the concerned line agencies – UTDMA, DDMA's and the stakeholders departments with a potent and effective tool of a reliable communication bridge and strengthens their capacity to act promptly during emergencies.

The development of the Decision Support System along with the development of DRDB (Disaster Risk Database) and IOFS (Integrated Operational Forecasting System) for hydro-meteorological hazards such as floods, flash floods, avalanches and drought developed under the World Bank-funded JTFRP is a robust integrated scientific system which will

form the backbone of the Emergency Operation Centre–The command and control system for the Disaster Management in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir–DEOCs' (District Emergency Operations Centres).

Er. Iftikhar Hakim, Director P&C also handed over the Report on the Upgraded Design Guidelines with respect to the Multiple Disasters in the J&K with specific reference to the Seismic Zone 4 & 5 was also formally handed over to the Principal Secretary, Housing and Urban Development Dept, J&K Govt.

The manuals prepared for the non-engineered constructions in the UT were also handed over to the Principal Secretary, H&UDD with the request to advise the urban local bodies, (municipal corporations, municipal committees) and the urban development authorities to disseminate the manuals to the citizens through their official websites and other possible means.



TAD launches flagship initiatives for education in hostels across J&K



Jammu: The Jammu and Kashmir Tribal Affairs Departments (TAD) on Saturday approved a series of reforms for the hostels across Jammu and Kashmir to provide state-of-the-art educational facilities to tribal students and focus on outcome-based quality education and skilling.

The Union Territory-level committee headed by Secretary, TAD, Shahid Iqbal Choudhary approved a number of measures and schemes to be launched with immediate effect from the current academic year for providing such facilities, an official said.

The approval was given at a meeting which was among others attended by special secretary, Harun Malik, secretary Gujjar and Bakerwal Advisory Board, Mukhtar Ahmed Choudhary, director Tribal Affairs, Mushir Ahmed Mirza and financial Advisor Ashok Thukaan.

In a significant move, the official said, the department approved the “Technology-Enabled Education Scheme” for hostel students under which students enrolled in Class 11, 12 and PG courses will be provided tabs-PCs with pre-loaded study material including books, animations, mind-maps, resource material and references.

The students will be allowed to own the tab even after being relieved from hostels on completion of course, he said, adding over 1,000 students studying in notified classes will be provided these tabs before July 31.

The official said the Tribal Research Institute (TRI) has been entrusted with course

and content design for tabs and providing to students.

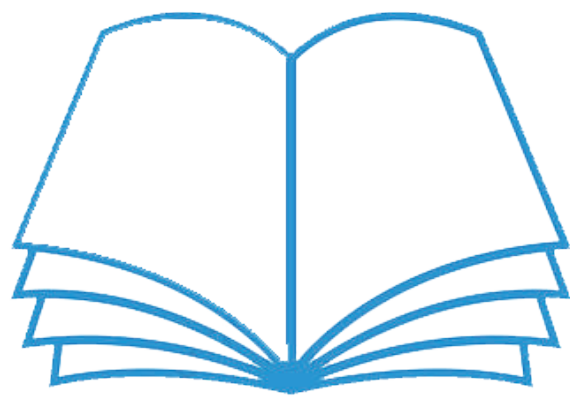
The tuition system in hostels was also given a boost with enhancement in the honorarium for tutors increasing it from the existing rates of Rs 1,000, Rs 1,200 and Rs 1,500 for tutors of Classes 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 11 and 12 to Rs 3000, Rs 4500 and Rs 6000 per month, respectively, a three-four times hike, the official said.

In an endeavour to provide educational facilities to the students throughout the year, he said the TAD has notified that hostels will operate and remain functional for 12 months instead of the present 10-month a year system in vogue.

“Special courses will be run during the vacation period for skilling of students including tribal students volunteering to enroll for such courses,” the official said.

He said the committee also accorded approval for 75 percent enhancement in the daily diet rate increasing it to Rs 175 per student per day with immediate effect, up from existing Rs 100 per student per day and further recommended enhancement to Rs 300 per student per day to be taken up in revised estimates of budget.

The official said the committee also reviewed the proposal for 25 new hostels which are being approved for current financial year at a cost of Rs 100 crore and completion of languishing hostels, many of which were pending in absence of requisite approvals and codal formalities for past many years.



JKPI Publications

CLIMATE CHANGE: DEEPENING THE VULNERABILITY OF KASHMIR HIMALAYAS



ZAHOOR AHMAD DAR

Ever since the human evolutionary process got rolling, the climate has exerted influence on the evolutionary pattern and human lives and has also been affected by it in return. Alteration in climatic patterns corresponds to the negative effects on the entire ecosystem. Climate change is unambiguously a reality. It poses an unequivocal threat to the livelihood of people, biodiversity, water resources, agriculture, national growth, and political economies of nations on a global scale. It is characterized by the rise in global temperatures and the occurrence of extreme weather events such as heatwaves, droughts, and floods. Kashmir Himalayas, nestled in a huge Himalayan belt, is considered to be a hotspot for climate change risk owing to its complicated topography, massive glacial and water resources, quick-responding watersheds with severe seasonality, and climate variability on a smaller scale.

Climate change has accelerated the already rising temperature, and unstable precipitation patterns and worsened the vulnerabilities to drought, thereby bringing the Himalayan ecosystem to naught. As per the findings of the article, “Recent Glacier changes in Kashmir Alpine Himalayas, India” glaciers have shrunk by 17%. Another study ‘Linking the recent glacier retreat and depleting stream flow patterns with land system changes in Kashmir Himalaya (India)’ examined changes in the Kolahoi Glacier between 1962 and 2018, and reveals that the glacier is receding at an alarming rate. It has lost almost 23% of its land, splitting into smaller pieces since 1962. As per IPCC, the glacial meltdown is projected to swell flooding; avalanches from snow slopes will become rampant and erode water supplies down the river stream. Another study reveals that the annual precipitation is likely to plummet by a maximum of 2.09–6.61% in the 2080s. Along with, during the 2080s, the seasonal distribution of precipitation is predicted to change dramatically, with reductions of

9%, 5.7 %, and 1.7%, respectively, in the winter, spring, and summer seasons.

In light of the above-stated climatic transformations that have and will continue to cause life-altering events, it is important to understand, assess and evaluate the impact accounted by climate change in the Kashmir Himalayas. A study that maps climate hotspots over the forest cover in India using computer-model-based temperature and rainfall has been conducted for the three future time periods i.e. years 2030, 2050, and 2085. It has been observed that the biggest temperature rises are expected in Ladakh, Jammu-Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh are expected to witness the smallest increases in rainfall if any at all. The temperature variation at Srinagar is shown in the table below:

Table: Temperature variation at Srinagar (degree celsius)

Sl. No.	Month	1985	1990	1995	1996	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
1.	January	-1.3	-1.1	-4.7	-2.7	-3.2	-0.8	-2.0	-3.6	-2.8	-2.9	0.3	-0.3	-0.13	-0.25	-0.25	0.4	-0.15
2.	February	-1.3	1.5	-0.7	0.7	-0.8	2.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.5	0.4	1.1	0.7	0.33	0.29	0.14	1.5	0.04
3.	March	4.7	2.5	3.4	4.9	4	4.6	2.9	3.2	4.5	3.7	5.6	5.3	04.7	03.0	05.3	5.0	06.5
4.	April	8.6	6.9	7.4	7.5	7.4	8.3	7.9	8.5	8.6	8.5	8.5	7.1	07.2	08.9	07.7	8.0	09.0
5.	May	10.9	11.9	10.5	10.0	9.6	11.4	13.2	14.5	11.3	9.1	10.7	9.9	13.3	11.9	11.5	10.8	11.1
6.	June	14.1	16.3	14.1	15.4	14.7	14.4	16.3	17.4	15.2	14.9	15.0	14.4	14.7	16.0	18.3	13.0	13.5
7.	July	19.1	18.5	18.7	17.8	20	18.4	18.7	19.5	17.1	18.9	16.9	18.0	19.3	17.8	19.1	16.9	17.7
8.	August	17.9	18.3	18.5	17.5	17.1	17.3	17.7	17.6	18.2	17.1	17.1	16.9	18.3	17.8	17.8	17.9	18.8
9.	September	12.5	14.1	11.4	13.8	13.8	14.5	11.3	11.2	11.6	13.6	12.6	13.7	12.3	13.3	11.3	11.9	13.3
10.	October	6.5	4.7	6.5	5.9	7.6	5.1	5.6	6.1	6.6	5.1	6.2	5.8	08.0	03.9	06.9	5.1	07.3
11.	November	0.3	0.3	-0.5	1.1	2.3	2.5	2.5	0.9	0.7	0.7	1.1	-0.02	03.5	-01.1	01.0	0.5	02.2
12.	December	-0.8	-1.7	-0.3	-3.1	0.5	-3.9	-0.7	-0.9	-0.8	0.0	-0.7	-0.03	00.0	-02.0	00.7	-0.8	-3.7

Source: State Action Plan on Climate Change (Jammu and Kashmir)

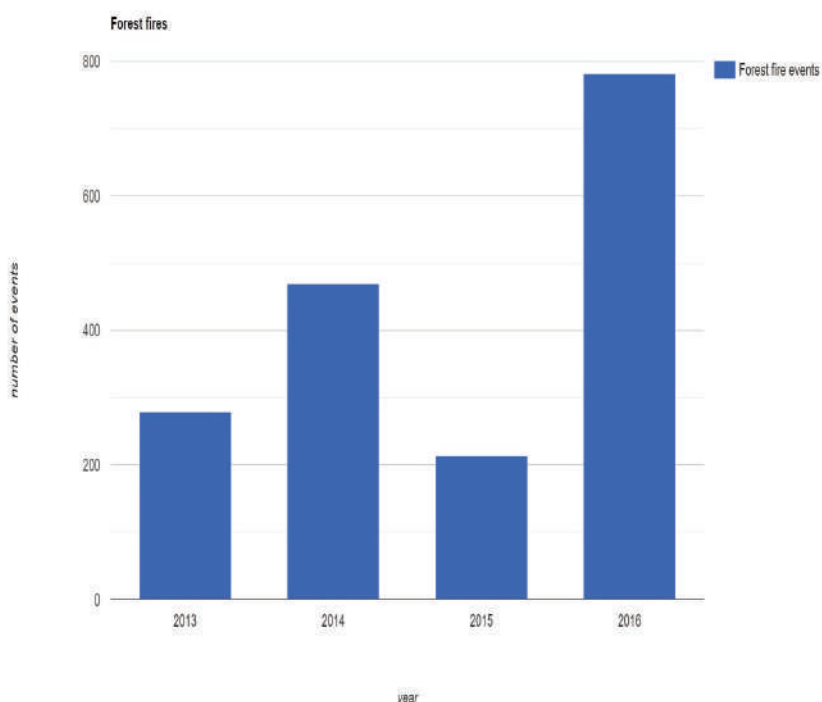
Additionally, according to the ENVIS newsletter (October-December, 2015) titled, “Climate Change and concerns of J&K”: Temperate deciduous, cool mixed, and conifer forests have grown significantly (11%) at the expense of alpine meadows, which are expected to shrink. Socio-economically, the repercussions are nothing less than a catastrophe as the Kashmir valley and Jammu wrestle to preserve its pristine flora comprising of Deodar, Fir, and spruce. Surprisingly, the Blue pine and Chir pine are left unscathed from the blight of climate change.

Not only the flora but fauna of Jammu & Kashmir seem to be in deep waters.

In recent times, the phenomenon of bird migration has witnessed peculiar trends, especially in the wetlands of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh throughout the winter. The latest Asian Waterbird Census Report highlighted the richness and abundance of water birds, as well as the trend in the water bird population during five years of extensive surveys from 2015-to 2021, revealed that Kashmir has recorded a total of 6.4 lakh birds. Nonetheless, the number has decreased by 1.5 lakh since 2020. The region's two Ramsar sites Hokersar wetland and Wular lake have seen a significant drop in the number of incoming birds. The census states that "birds in Hokersar wetland decreased from 4.8 lakh in 2020 to 65,000 in 2021, while birds in Wular decreased from 1.2 lakh to 707 birds in 2021".

The scourge of climate change is evident with the intensification of forest fires. It is not surprising to know that forest fires due to rising heat waves are on surge in Kashmir Himalayas. Forest fires are frequent in the subtropical woods of the Jammu region, although their intensity and frequency have been low in the Kashmir region. However, as a result of global climate change, winter precipitation has been below average for the last few years, resulting in a dry fall, which produces an atmosphere conducive to forest fires. The region has thus witnessed an increased incidence of forest fires. According to the Forest Department's official report, the year 2016 had unprecedented forest fire incidences. "In the state, there were about 781 forest fire occurrences registered." The research noted that "these infernos affected an astounding 2556.3 hectares, which is more than 200 percent greater than the equivalent year 2015." "Of the 781 events documented, 289 were fire incidents in Kashmir and 492 in the Jammu region," according to the report. "In 2015, there were 214 fire events across the state, affecting 341.4 hectares of land. The state had 470 and 278 forest fire incidents in 2014 and 2013, respectively," according to the report. The report notes that the number of forest fires in 2016 was higher than in prior years.

Figure 1: Incidents of forest fire in Jammu and Kashmir between 2013-2016.



We have understood how detrimental climate change can be for humans, culture, and ecology. However, to understand the consequences of climate change in Jammu and Kashmir, digging out the causes is a prerequisite. In J&K, unplanned urban growth, conflicts, changing socioeconomic profiles, excessive and unplanned exploitation of natural resources (like Dal Lake or deforestation), unplanned construction, climate variability and change, and many other factors all contribute to increased vulnerability to the Himalayan ecology. Key human interventions such as encroachment, pollution, siltation, and increasing resource exploitation, together with insufficient and improper planting, have a significant negative influence on the Himalayan environment. This regressive trend may be stopped with sustainable development practices that strive

for balanced growth. Bearing in mind the harmful effects of climate change, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir introduced the Sustainable Himalaya Mission. The Sustainable Himalaya Mission aims to:

1. A comprehensive investigation of the effects of climate change on species of plants, animals, and glacial ecology;
2. Research on the sensitivity of mountain ecosystems;
3. Participation of the community in the preservation and protection of the mountain, terrestrial, and aquatic ecologies;
4. Building capacities and increasing awareness among all stakeholders;
5. Institutional growth for biodiversity protection and conservation;
6. Climate grids' identification and impact on forests and biological resources;
7. Ecological research on land and water;
8. Investigation of human involvement in ecological hotspots;
9. Study of how the climate affects the timing of migratory bird movements;
10. Identification of the Himalayan ecosystem's present state and a study of climate trends for the Himalayan environment.

Deleterious Ramifications:

Predictive risks experienced due to climate change will have major consequences for industries such as agriculture, water resources, and human health. Although the decrease in the number of frost days and an extension of the growing season may be beneficial to agriculture, however soaring temperatures and decreasing precipitation will result in increased water demands for irrigation. Teetering temperature and precipitation scenarios will exert a direct impact on water supplies and water-dependent systems. Dry spells are a new tendency in Kashmir's environment, with exceptionally protracted dry periods occurring in recent years, causing severe water shortages. None of the 23 wells in Kashmir assessed for the May 2016 report had a water level moreover 20.0 meters below ground level, according to the Ground Water Year Book 2016-17. (m bgl). Water levels less than 2.0 m bgl have been recorded in 14 wells, according to the report, while the depth to the water level in seven wells ranges from 2 to 5 m bgl. One well showed water levels in the 5-10 m bgl range, and another well showed water levels in the 10-20 m bgl range." During the summer and autumn seasons, prolonged dry periods, as indicated by consecutive dry days, have an impact on surface water availability.

Conclusion:

Climate change isn't Hailey's comet that will wake people from their carefree slumber after 75 years; rather it is akin to bacteria that grow speedily in space. Climate change is here to stay; therefore, it becomes imperative to prioritize and preserve biodiversity and address the climate change-based issues in Kashmir Himalayas. Climate change over mountainous basins demands a broader understanding of present and future temperature and precipitation regimes for better water resource management, hydropower generation, cryospheric resources, natural hazard risk assessment, and ecosystem response. The article calls for policy intervention in the future climate scenario of the Kashmir Himalayas. The changes in climatic conditions of the region will have serious ramifications in terms of water availability and the glacial environment of the Kashmir Himalayas.

HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL OF DOORDARSHAN KENDRA SRINAGAR



JK POLICY INSTITUTE

Vasa Cubrilovic, who was part of the gang that assassinated Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914, which is believed to have triggered World War I, once said that the “countries that still go to war have not evolved.” When asked ‘evolved from what?’, he was unequivocal: “From fear. From nationalism based on fear.”

When Doordarshan created the country’s third production centre in Srinagar after its Delhi and Bombay (Mumbai) Kendras, it was not without a reason. Obviously, a lot of political/strategic thinking, in the highest echelons of Govt of India, (and not just the I&B Ministry) was behind bringing Kashmir onto the country’s mediascape.

The kind (quality) and amount (quantity) of the television content that was generated at Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar during the subsequent years justified the trust that the bosses of I&B and other ministries had reposed in it. No wonder this Kendra created a unique position for itself by having many firsts under its belt, be it the first-ever live phone-in show, for the first soap opera – ‘Shabrang’, which ran 104 episodes and catapulted its characters (artistes) into becoming household names. For instance, the main character in the play, named Shamsuddin in it and played by Mr. Shadilal Koul made him so popular that for the next thirty years of his life Mr. Koul was known and identified as Shamsuddin. Similarly, Ms. Rita Jalali, who played a modern-day woman-clerk in the popular drama ‘Dastaar’, would be known and identified as her screen name (in this play) Kusumlata for the rest of her life.

Scores of such instances could be cited to drive home the point that the ordinary people of Kashmir adored the artists, people who featured in various programmes of Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar or for that matter Radio Kashmir Srinagar, so much that they were treated as celebrities – of course with the difference that people would identify with them as being part of them, from among them.

‘ZoonDab’, the daily road soap broadcast every morning, or for that matter programme ‘Wadi ki Awaaz’ in the evenings, are popular even today among the generation that had listened to these radio programmes – no matter that it has been over three decades since these programmes have stopped riding the airwaves.

The point being made is simple: the kind of content that was generated here – at both Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar and Radio Kashmir Srinagar (now All India Radio, Srinagar) was of such a quality that they would keep people glued to their TV and radio sets.

The World Bank says, “conflict is development in reverse”. While the political turmoil (conflict) that has been raging in Kashmir for over 30 years now has affected and impacted every sphere of life here, the media too has been no exception, and certainly not the Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar. Together with the falling ranks – old and talented people retiring from service and no fresh blood by way of recruitments coming in – this Kendra has taken a beating over the past three decades. And today the situation is such that one finds it very hard to find or name a single programme which would deserve a mention for its quality of content or even the context.

Without elaborately dissecting what has gone wrong and why – for that would require naming and blaming people, which certainly is not required – a simple example should be able to hit the nail on the head. For instance, a great number of social welfare schemes are

initiated by the central ministries and local administration with the aim to uplift, empower and safeguard the underprivileged sections of society and to achieve basic facilities of livelihood, healthcare, education and social justice for all.

Despite governments allocating substantial amounts of funds in annual budgets, most of the schemes and even some flagship programmes draw little or no success and often fail to achieve the intended result. From nutrition to education and from social equality to social justice, there are various schemes which can change the ground scenario and bring about a definitive difference in the status quo. Each scheme is designed and curated to suit the needs and demands of the underprivileged and yet no scheme has ever realised its full potential. Several government agencies have often admitted, as has also been pointed out by many non-government agencies, that there is a huge gap between the intended change and the ground situation as the essence of each scheme is either misinterpreted, misunderstood, mismanaged or miscommunicated. These are the reasons besides many other factors that also contribute to the inefficiency of the process of execution of a scheme!

Based on several such studies, it is evident that the reasons for the success or failure of a scheme possess quantifiable parameters which can be demystified by applying certain simple yet powerful tools of interpretation and analysis.

A general overview reveals that all the schemes have tremendous potential to bring about a positive change and yet all the schemes are prone to failure mainly because of the reasons given below:

- 1- Lack of information, education and communication regarding a scheme
- 2- Lack of vibrant and relevant media campaigns
- 3- Lack of public participation
- 4- Lack of political will
- 5- Corruption

There can be many more reasons but the abovementioned reasons are generally agreed upon by the government as well as non-government agencies vested with the job of analysing the success or failure of a scheme.

If analysed thoroughly, it is clear that all such hurdles pose a severe threat to the success of any scheme but if addressed in time, there can be a reversal of sorts. However, what is primarily the mother of all ills is the lack of information, education and communication which limits the scope of any policy, programme or scheme as this leads to a lack of public participation which details the possibility of a strong political will and ultimately gives rise to corruption!

This is where media comes into play for its basic aims are the same: to inform, educate and entertain. Thus, a coherent, comprehensive and sustained media campaign emerges as a necessary and effective antidote and needs to be brought into action. Detailed content management and a comprehensive content dissemination policy need to be put in order to inform, educate and communicate masses regarding the various schemes, certainly not only the ones regarding social welfare but other spheres and sectors as well.

This two-fold strategy would ensure that people are well aware of their rights and know the details of the benefits each policy promises. It will also clear the notion that welfare schemes are full of hassles, time-consuming, treacherous and thus beyond the common people’s reach.

In the age of technology and modernity, information, education and communication are the most potent weapons and using them efficiently and creatively would definitely bring about a positive change vis-a-vis people’s perceptions about the government and also in its mediation and interaction with the government and its agencies, its policies and programmes.



However, for some reason, this area has been altogether neglected as for the content creation and generation at, and for the Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar is concerned. Here the only aim seems to earn a quick and steady buck for all those people who are associated with it – be they from the in-house human resource or the private/outside ones.

For the past several years Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar has been starved for funds. While there is already a huge backlog of payments running into crores, lack of money is also limiting its capacity to create fresh content. Making matters worse is the fact that now officers from various other states are sent here for fixed tenures ranging from a few months to a year-long duration. Most of these people come here as if they are on punishment posting. They count their days while being posted here – waiting desperately for a flight back home. Now add to it that they have no knowledge or interest in local situations, culture and sensitivities. For them Kashmir, even at its best, is only a holiday destination where they can host their visiting families and friends – with almost all logistical costs being borne by the Doordarshan Srinagar, which has a hostel with very good lodging and other facilities!

A few suggestions are worth consideration to harness the potential of Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar. Given its contributions during yesteryears, the Kendra still has some trust and goodwill which could be used as a take-off point to resurrect and rechristen its position as a public broadcaster.

1. Measures should be initiated to rope in and draw from the people who have an intimate knowledge and appreciation of the J&K's peculiarities – in terms of its politics, culture, local lore, beliefs and traditions.

2. When Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar established its credentials as a pioneering institution, media was not formally taught anywhere in J&K. Today almost every single university in J&K has a PG-level course in Mass Communication and Journalism. So there will certainly be no dearth of talent for content creation and generation if only the measures are initiated to tap into this resource pool.

3. Instead of relying on propaganda, a truthful depiction of the realities as they exist on the ground on both sides across the Line of Control could be the perfect tool to unmask the ugly falsehoods that are spread and used to hoodwink the gullible audiences here. Correct and factual depiction of actual realities could be employed to woo and wean away people from self-inflicting thinking and conduct.

4. Since media, particularly the government-owned and run public broadcasters like Doordarshan are seen by the general masses as an extension of the state and its systems (government in general), it can be effectively used to re-cultivate the lost trust and

rapport with the public. For example, a few programmes to highlight public grievances, with a mechanism to flag them directly with the concerned government functionaries/departments/officials can certainly set the ball rolling for two-way communication between the government and the public. This is something that alters the political dynamics at the popular level for good.

5. Reality TV — Live-phone in shows, educational programmes, even musical and acting shows, and game shows with active public/audience participation could be a huge draw if created with imagination and creativity.

6. Doordarshan Kendra Srinagar could/should also draw from its archives for the popular and meaningful dramas and serials like 'Dastaar', 'TeenthKour', 'Aka Nandun' and the lines to try and re-live that era for the audiences wherein communal harmony and amity were shared, celebrated and lived culture.

7. Doordarshan can also make short-duration films of international standard depicting, very creatively, all the nuances of a scheme and presenting the details in a manner that are easy to grasp and understand particularly for the intended audiences. Such films should cover the shared culture of desperation and depravity brought about by the political turmoil and associated violence sponsored from across the border. For instance, a 15-minute story of a poor man from the countryside done to death for refusing shelter to the terrorists or for not heeding their diktat or having been associated with and mainstream political party, if told with sensitivity and concern and with utmost factual accuracy could do hours of brazen propaganda cannot.

8. Talk shows and discussions on day-to-day social/political situations, literary, and youth programs, revolving around contemporary issues of concern and interest should be made into a regular format.

9. Films/programmes helping people to make career choices could be brought in. For instance, every year there are thousands of opportunities like educational courses and fellowships and internships which are made available by the developed countries for the students of the global south. A programme highlighting these opportunities, and guiding the prospective beneficiaries on how to avail of these benefits by roping in suggestions from the experts in the field (career counsellors/those who have already been abroad on such fellowships, etc.) would ensure public trust, besides of course achieving the basic aims of educating and informing the audiences.

10. Detailed documentary films could draw a comparison between what it was, what it is and what it will be in terms of education/politics/social welfare etc. can be an area to work with.

11. News has to be restored to what it should be – nothing less, nothing more.

MUSIC OF KASHMIR: PAST PERFECT, FUTURE UNCERTAIN

Kashmir, known as “Heaven on Earth,” has a diverse cultural legacy. Recent trends in Kashmiri poetry have evolved in tandem with contemporary folk music, keeping pace with the changing environment. Sufiana Mausiqi is Kashmir’s classical music, which developed under Sultan Zain-ul-reign Abidin’s in the 15th century (1420-1470). It falls under the category of mystical music, which is performed by musicians from several Kashmiri Gharanas.

The number of people who practice this music tradition has decreased in recent decades. The remaining artists, such as Mushtaq Ahmad Saaznawaz (from Danamazar Safakadal’s 7th generation of the Saaznawaz family), are afraid of the same fate. “To my mind, the sound is the purest form of music, uncorrupted and unburdened by any extraneous elements,” says Mushtaq Ahmad Saaznawaz.

Sufiana Mausiqi: “Sufiana Mausiqi” is a type of choral vocal music in which five to twelve musicians sing together to the accompaniment of Santoor, Saaz-e-Kashmir, Kashmiri Sehtar, and Tabla. Persian Maqams are utilized instead of Raga. The songs’ lyrics are mystical Sufi poems written in Persian and Kashmiri. Maqam is the foundation of Sufiana Mausiqi’s music. Within the framework of the Maqam, as with the ragas, a musician is free to develop and produce variants and inner colors.

A Sufiana Mausiqi performance always begins with a Shakal, or instrumental prelude. It’s similar to Hindustani music’s Chalan or first Alaap, which is sluggish and introduces the song’s topic. The Shakal, unlike Hindustani Alaap, is an instrumental interpretation of the Maqam’s basis (or Structure). It normally lasts anything from a half-minute to two minutes. It is frequently played on Santoor by the ensemble’s leader. Artists may occasionally join him. The shake is frequently followed by Nasr, a short song in which the Lalle-Vaakh couplets of Lalleshwari are sung. The Nasr is recited without a rhythm, and then the first poetry begins after Nasr (Bathe). Little improvisation is used in the composition. The form is identical to the poem’s form. Each verse is assigned to a specific Maqam and is tied to a specific tala cycle. It’s worth noting that the longest talas are performed first, followed by the shorter talas. For example, if Tala Hejaz (14 Matras/beats) is played first, the following Tala will be Yektala or Sehtala (12 Matras), followed by Duyeka (8 Matras), and so on (Mir, 2015).

Current state and the reason for the decline

The musical tradition of “Sufiana Mausiqi”



has been fading due to the socio-political-economic changes in Kashmir. It used to be widely practiced throughout the valley, but now only a few artisans are left to carry on the tradition. It is difficult for the remaining ustads (master musicians) to keep the tradition alive. Many Maqams and Talas have been lost in the shuffle. The lone bow instrument, the Saaz-e-Kashmir, is on the verge of extinction. Sufiana Mausiqi was once affiliated with a dance form known as Hafiz Nagma. “Hafiza,” a female dancer, would express the song’s message with varied hand gestures and body motions. This dancing style is no longer in use. Hafiz Nagma is claimed to have been a key member of the Sufiana ensemble as late as 1920. Still, after this period, this dance form started declining rapidly and finally became extinct.

Late Pandit Bhajan Sopori, Santoor Maestro and Music composer had stated: “The decline of Sufiana Mausiqi is actually due to the loss of patronage and low economic incentive. People did not want to take the risk of letting their children learn an art form that doesn’t provide economic security. As a result, very few people learned Sufiana, and it remained limited to a few people.” Mr. Mehrajuddin, former Additional Secretary, Jammu & Kashmir State Cultural Academy, gives the following reason for the current situation of Sufiana Mausiqi: “Sufiana Mausiqi developed in the royal courts at the time of the Sultanate period and also under Maharajas. As soon as the rule of Kings and Maharajas was over in India after 1947, Sufiana took refuge in the Mehfiles of music lovers, shrines, and continued journey. The lovers of this music would organize frequent Mehfiles at their homes on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, resulting in which the artists would get compensation. Sufiana artists were even booked for marriages during this period.”

Kashmiris from all across the region were huge fans of this art form, and it was

an important element of their celebrations, such as weddings. Everything changed with the arrival of modernization and globalization. People’s musical tastes evolved as well, and they began to prefer light musical genres such as Chakri, Ghazal, and Pop music. As a result, Sufiana was pushed to the margins. Its downfall can also be traced back to the musicians themselves. In the past, certain Ustads would keep this work hidden from others. Some Ustads avoided teaching this talent to their daughters’ sons for fear of the art being passed on to other family members (Mir, 2015).

Safeguarding the vanishing art form

Kashmir’s music is diverse and rich; it has its own classical music, Sufiana Mausiqi. Chakri, Ruff, Ladishah, and Bandh Pather are other types of traditional music in the region, and they are associated with festivals, weddings, harvests, and ministerial songs. Music unites people from all walks of life, across boundaries, languages, and cultures. Learning about the historical significance of a music tradition can also help you comprehend the people of a particular location and their heritage.

Experts like Mushtaq Ahmad Saaznawaz (who have also started training youths by setting up their institutions and teaching the students for free) suggest that the classical music of a region like Sufiana Mausiqi should be introduced to the children from a young age. And it should be taught in schools. Those learning Sufi/classical music should get scholarships to complete their training. These scholarships and reward-based approaches would encourage interested people to continue their learning and can attract a new audience to delve into the world of Sufiana Mausiqi (Irfan Yattoo, 2021). This way, the tradition can be ensured to last and expand to other realms and across borders.

Sri Lanka's food security crisis continues as over 28 pc of its population is "food insecure"



YASHI SINGH

The end of the Cold War era had created an elbow room for nations to change their approach whilst dealing with threats of traditional and non-traditional nature. Food, climate and water security are some of the non-traditional security areas that are seen as a potential threat or "threat multiplier" by the state. These non-traditional security threats can further exacerbate the political, social, or economic setting of a nation as we are witnessing currently in the world. This play-off between the traditional and non-traditional security challenges is evident in the geopolitical crisis in South Asia and beyond.

A food security crisis can be a potential threat to a nation in situations where the food supply is obstructed intentionally by the State or non-state actors. Last year, the Assad regime proclaimed the "kneel or starve" policy in Syria, which exhibits that food insecurity could upend the status quo of a government. The protracted hostilities in the Sub-Saharan African region have also led to chronic food insecurity while the majority of people in Africa belong to low-income families due to which they are unable to meet basic necessities like food.

Consequently, youth are susceptible to being influenced and recruited by terrorist organizations like Boko Haram and ISIS. Henceforth, it becomes easy for terrorist organisations to lure victims of food crisis by offering them incentives including food. As a result, when people start losing trust in the state, they look for other options to satisfy their needs and, unfortunately, it becomes difficult to enunciate morality when there isn't enough food to eat. Considering the above context, the food crisis in Sri Lanka could become a "threat multiplier" if appropriate solutions are not put in place.

The Ukraine war is a case in point which was flagged by many including UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres as a ticking bomb for the food crisis. Russia and Ukraine export almost a quarter of the world's wheat and barley and nearly 70% of the sunflower oil. 45% of Sri Lanka's wheat imports and more than 50% of peas, sunflower oil, soybeans, and seeds, and purchase of other significant intermediate goods like copper, steel, iron and potassium chloride for fertilisers are sourced from Russia and Ukraine. The food crisis accompanied by the acute shortage of gas and kerosene oil, and extreme dependency on imports have exacerbated the crisis. Consequently, the disturbance in supply chains and Sri Lanka's already worsening foreign reserves from the pandemic-induced slowdown has taken a toll on Colombo with foreign debts of \$8.6 billion and the most severe food crisis since independence.

Food Security Crisis in Sri Lanka

Over six million people or over 28 per cent of Sri Lanka's population are "food insecure" and this situation is likely to deteriorate as the crisis unfolds in the island nation which is grappling with its worst economic crisis, the World Food Programme has said. Analysing the reasons that steered Sri Lanka to its current crisis would point to inefficient governance and poor policy decisions of the central administration. The first political blunder was the abrupt ban on chemical fertilizers in a bid to adopt organic farming. The decision lacked long-term vision as 90% of Sri Lankan were highly dependent on chemical fertilizers, which in turn impinged on the production of rice, the staple crop of the island country, and the key export crops like tea, coconut, and rubber. Consequently, the high dependence on food imports of wheat flour, milk powder, lentils, tea, and rice incur a debt of \$50 billion, totalling a disastrous 15.9% of the GDP.

According to T Vijay Kumar, ex-officio chief secretary, Natural

Farming, Andhra Pradesh, it takes more than 3-5 yrs. to adopt organic farming in a nation and is normally executed in different phases rather than implemented without breaks. Although the ban was lifted within 6 months, substantial damage was already done by that time. Sri Lanka, for a long time, was self-sufficient in the production of rice. According to the US Department of Agriculture, the production of rice has decreased from 3.39 million tonnes in 2020-2021 to 2.92 million tonnes in 2021-2022 and the imports stood at 147000 tonnes in 2020-2021 while it is 650000 tonnes from 2021 to 2022 and these figures came at a period when most of the land in Sri Lanka was utilized for the production of rice. The fall in the output of rice was observed by critics after the ban on chemical fertilizers. Though the ban was an attempt from the government to reduce its import of fertilizers, the decision was taken hastily without comprehending its detrimental effects on the yield of rice.

High inflationary trends at 56.4 percent sparked by the food crisis rendered almost 25% of Sri Lanka's population requiring immediate food assistance. According to the World Food Programme, 86 per cent of households are resorting to methods like reducing food consumption or missing out on meals on a particular day to grapple with food crises. According to the UN Resident Coordinator in Sri Lanka, Hanna Singer-Hamdy stated that almost 25% of Sri Lanka's population requires immediate food assistance. According to the figures released by the Department of Census and Statistics, food Inflation jumped to 57.4% in May from 46.6% in April and the food crisis concomitant with the energy crisis has added fuel to the fire.

Another crisis in waiting was the borrowing pattern of the island country which is categorised as a lower middle-income country. Although borrowing from abroad isn't novel for Sri Lanka, earlier debts incurred were at low-interest rates and obligated to be paid off in a window of 25 to 40 years. The high incidence of International Sovereign Bonds and commercial loans left foreign debt unmanageable wherein Colombo needed to repay short-term loans of five to 10 years at higher interests. According to the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, the debt to GDP ratio significantly increased from 30 percent in 2014 to 101 percent of GDP in 2020. Further, not taking cognizance of its declining trade levels, down from 33 percent in 2000 to 13 percent in 2019 and the ever-increasing reliance on foreign debt generated the economic rut that we see in Colombo today.

There was an upsurge in the forex reserves of Sri Lanka in May 2022. It rose from \$1.81 billion in April to \$1.92 billion in May as there was a flow of credit from India under the Asian Clearing Union. However, the foreign reserves of Sri Lanka reduced in totality as it was \$ 2.3 billion in February 2022 and by March it had plunged to \$ 1.93 billion, Though, the Covid-19 effectuated the economic crisis globally and Sri Lanka was no exception. The tourism sector and tea which were instrumental in attracting foreign exchanges to Sri Lanka were negatively affected and so was its contribution to Sri Lanka's GDP. According to the data from the World Travel and Tourism Council, Sri Lanka's tourism business contributed 10.4% of its GDP in 2019 and it tumbled to 4.9% in 2020.

Conclusion

At this juncture, it is clear that the solution to the current crisis lies in a well-balanced scheme of free market ideology and welfarism in policy planning. Restructuring the economy as per the IMF guidelines would take months to show results, however, it is the only external option for #SriLanka to start dealing with the worst economic crisis that the country is facing since its independence from Britain in 1948. In the unravelling political crisis, an expert committee must be constituted involving different stakeholders with all-party consensus to frame a long-term strategy in closing the gaps between the harvest period, intensifying the production of rice and other food crops, and incentivising exports to earn foreign currency. In the meantime, immediate measures like the reformation of policies on the fishing industry as fish is a valuable protein option would provide immediate relief to crisis-induced starvation and malnutrition. As foreign debt becomes the mainstay, the committee needs to devise policies that assist Sri Lanka to raise its domestic production. Foreign aid and lines of credit must be put to use in securing fuel and gas as interim relief.

Climate Change and Natural Disasters in South Asia



ADEELA HAMEED

Natural disasters are on the rise worldwide. There are more and more intense natural disasters – determined to cause at least 100 deaths or to affect the basic survival needs of at least 1,000 people – resulting from floods and storms as well as droughts and heat waves. The Asia and the Pacific region has experienced some of the most damaging natural disasters in recent decades, with alarming consequences for human welfare. At the same time, the climate in the region has been changing. Temperatures have been higher, on average, and also more variable and more extreme. Rainfall has also been more variable and more extreme.

In 2021, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) launched 26 new operations, 15 of which were climate-related disaster responses. The IFRC is still responding to a further 21 disasters across Asia and the Pacific, from previous years.

At the annual climate summit in the Polish city of Katowice, a risk index was released that shows countries in South Asia are among the most vulnerable, globally, to the impacts of climate change. India has been ranked the 14th most vulnerable nation on the list topped by Puerto Rico, ravaged by Hurricane Maria in 2017. Sri Lanka was in second place. Nepal was ranked the 4th most vulnerable country while Bangladesh was ranked 9th.

Climate change and extreme weather events

South Asia has been the worst hit this year, with millions of people affected by multiple disasters and little time to recover from one to the next.

Other countries across Asia have also been affected. Nearly one million people were swamped by flooding in Thailand, more than half a million people were affected by floods and typhoons in the Philippines, and over 125,000 people were hit by floods in Myanmar. Pacific Island countries also faced significant flooding due to storms and rising sea tides.

In 2017, around 2,726 deaths in India were directly related to extreme climate-related events, such as storms, heat waves, floods, and droughts. The Global Climate Risk Index 2019 reported that India suffered an economic loss of about USD 13.8 billion in the year.

The index report prepared by Berlin-based environmental organization Germanwatch, which analyses the extent to which countries and regions have been affected by impacts of extreme weather, states that between 1998 and 2017, more than 526,000 people died worldwide. There were losses of USD 3.47 trillion as a result of more than 11,500 extreme weather events.

About 11,500 people died because of extreme weather events and economic damages totaled around USD 375 billion worldwide.

Disastrous storms and climate connection

Recent storms with intensity levels never seen before have had disastrous impacts. Poor countries are hardest hit. But extreme weather events also threaten the further development of upper-middle-income countries and can even overburden high-income countries.

Massive rainfall led to floods across South Asia in Nepal, Bangladesh, and India, which affected more than 40 million people. As many as 200 people lost their lives in these countries and millions were displaced throughout the region. Nepal experienced flash floods and landslides in August 2017 across the southern border with India, leading to USD 600 million in damages. The floods spread across the foothills of the Himalayas and brought landslides, destroying tens of thousands of houses, vast areas of farmland, and roads.

Sri Lanka experienced exceptionally heavy rain caused dramatic flooding that killed 200 people and left hundreds of thousands of people homeless.

South Asia had also been hit by two cyclones in as many weeks, with Cyclone Amphan ravaging parts of eastern India and Bangladesh. Coming at a time when countries in South Asia are grappling with the Covid-19 crisis, this has only multiplied the plight of millions.

Climate change amplifies the cyclonic storms that typically form in the northern Indian Ocean. Warmer oceans mean there is higher rainfall during storms. Rising sea levels due to global warming make for higher storm surges, which reach larger inland areas. A warmer ocean does not automatically mean there will be more cyclones, but if the cyclones are born, they will become stronger on account of a warmer sea.

About one-third of the global population lives around the Indian Ocean, many in low-lying coastal areas, small islands, developing states and least developed countries that are particularly vulnerable to climate impacts. The Arabian Sea was spared severe cyclones but that no longer seems to be the case. It had five cyclones in 2019. IPCC reports indicate an increase in Arabian Sea cyclones during the pre and post-monsoon seasons as a response to the rapid ocean warming trends.

South Asia's poorer countries are impacted the most

Eight of the 10 countries, as per the Germanwatch index, most affected between 1998 and 2017 are developing economies.

It has been said that there is increasing evidence of the link between El Niño events and global warming. The occurrence of El Niño, a warm current in the Pacific Ocean, affects the monsoon in South Asia, which is vital for the summer cropping season. The occurrence of such events could double in the future due to climate change.

The Australian meteorological department has predicted that there is evidence that El Niño is developing. This could have an adverse impact on Indian farming, which is already in the midst of a crisis.

Threat to coastal cities

South Asia houses millions and with massive unplanned growth, the poor constantly shift to low-lying areas, making them particularly vulnerable to severe storms and flooding. According to NASA, global sea levels have risen by about 23 cm compared with pre-industrial times and are rising by 3.3 mm every year. This has grievous implications for South Asian cities on the coast or close to it.

Natural storm breakers such as mangroves have been cut down in recent years. The vanishing mangroves around Mumbai are a case in point. Many experts are of the opinion that the damage from Cyclone Amphan would have been much greater if the mangroves of the Sundarbans had not blunted the storm's fury somewhat.

The damage cyclones cause is made worse by inadequate drainage systems and loss of ponds that used to hold water, encroachment over existing drainage systems, and reduction in coastal mangroves. Implementation of coastal zone regulations in consultation with local communities is an important approach to safeguarding ecosystem services.



Addressing climate impacts in South and Southeast Asia

The ongoing climate summit has to increase efforts to properly address loss and damage. At present, it is a cross-cutting issue referenced throughout various negotiation streams, with a significant risk of being omitted from the final negotiation text. Countries like Haiti, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan are repeatedly hit by extreme weather events and have no time to fully recover. It is important to support these countries in climate change adaptation, but that is not sufficient. They need predictable and reliable financial support for dealing with climate-induced loss and damage as well.

The 24th Conference of Parties aims to prepare the rule book needed to implement the Paris Agreement. It is uncertain how loss and damage due to the impacts of climate change will be taken up under the Paris Agreement.

SHRI AMARNATHJI YATRA

