Udhampur LS constituency achieves near saturation in 'Viksit Bharat' schemes: Dr Jitendra

KATHUA: The Udhampur-Kathua Lok Sabha constituency has achieved near saturation in all schemes, such as agriculture, Kisan Credit Card, PM Ujjwal Yojana and PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, being covered under the Bharat Viksit Sankalp Yatra. informed Union Minister State Charge) (Independent Science Technology; Minister State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Pensions. Grievances. Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh here on

Monday. Dr Jitendra was speaking at a Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra event held at Panchayat Bhorthain North (Baira) in Block Barnoti of district Kathua district.

The Minister informed that out of 500 odd constituencies in the country, the Udhampur-Kathua Lok Sabha seat stands out in terms of completion of developmental works.

He said, it is the only constituency in the country



Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh addressing a gathering at Panchayat Bhorthain North (Baira) in Block Barnoti of district Kathua, on Monday

which has three Centrallyaided medical colleges in the districts of Udhampur, Kathua and Doda.

As far as implementation of welfare schemes is concerned, the constituency is also among the first, he added.

The Minister was updated by the administration that while in agriculture related schemes like Kisan Credit Card, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana etc and PM Ujjwal Yojana, nearly 100%saturation has been achieved, Ayushman Card has achieved nearly 99% target and pace has been substantially increased for

MD J&K Bank launches Soft POS and

Premium Debit Cards

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana which has proved to be a game-changer by providing Pucca houses to those who had never dreamt of it or desired it.

Dr. Jitendra stated that through the over 50-day Yatra, there has been a change in mindset and social culture, adding that previously, people had to go to the government departments and officials to get their work done, and seek delivery of services.

That has been changed as it is now the government that has come to the doorsteps of citizens to serve them directly. This has

work culture, he added. The Minister said that

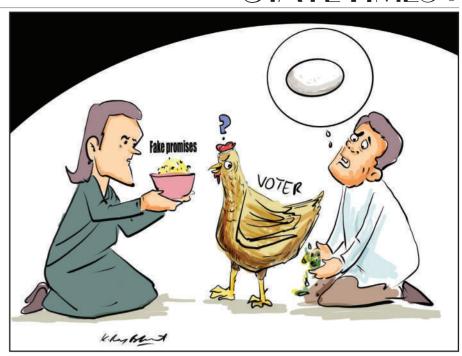
people's representatives are delivering services without any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed or religion. This has brought a positive change in social attitudes, psyche as well as behaviour.

Dr. Jitendra said PM Vishwakarma Yojana has empowered artisans and craft persons by providing them financial assistance to propel their craft which was

The government is not

but is also providing them training so that their businesses thrive, and more youth take up the craft which was fetching dwindling returns, he explained.

In the same way, PM SVANidhi Yojana has come to the aid of street vendors who can avail loans up to ten thousand rupees under the scheme to set up businesses of their own, and live with dignity, said Dr. Singh. He added that the street vendors have now become an important component of the society, the Minister said.



IIM Jammu inaugurates Education Leadership Development Training Prog for College Principals of J&K

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: The Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu, known for its commitment to academic excellence, has initiated a Development Faculty Programme (FDP) titled, "Education Leadership Development Training for Program" College Principals of Jammu and Kashmir.

The program, organized under the aggis of the Executive Education and Consultancy Division, commenced from January 8, and will go on till January 12,

The inaugural session commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, setting a symbolic tone for the enlightening journey ahead.

Kumar,

Dr. V. Raj

Programme Director at IIM Jammu, extended a warm welcome and provided insights into the program's objectives. Dr. Ateeque Chairperson. Executive Education and Consultancy (EE & C), IIM



faculty posing for a photograph.

Jammu offered a brief Executive Education & Consultancy at IIM Jammu

Prof. Jabir Ali, Dean Academics, IIM Jammu, emphasized that the programme signifies our commitment to fostering educational leadership, empowering college principals to steer academic excellence in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir. I would like to urge that educational institutes work together and collaborate for nation-building and global

In his address, Prof. B.S. Director, IIM Sahay, Jammu, highlighted that the Leadership Education Development Training Program underscores IIM Jammu's unwavering commitment to educational excel-

The program's focus on aligning with the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020) and fostering innovation is crucial for our education system's growth. Empowering college principals and senior faculty is more than a program; it's a transformative towards shaping visionary leaders. He emphasized that Jammu is unique with three Institutes of National Importance-IIM, IIT, and

Collaborations include programs like B.Tech + MBA with IIT Jammu and MBA in Hospital Administration and Management with HT and AHMS, exemplifying NEP 2020. He mentioned that this initiative will play a pivotal role in shaping the region's education future, aligning with national prioritomorrow for students in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The participants were given

a tour of the Institute including the state-of-the-art Library at IIM Jammu. The program aims to equip Principals and Senior faculty of colleges with essential leadership skills, aligning their vision with contemporary educational trends and the evolving needs of students and the community. Key objectives include the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) in colleges, enhancing instructional leadership, fostering effective communication, promoting cultural competence, encouraging innovation and adaptability, and instilling data-informed decision-making skills.

The inaugural event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Anuja Akhouri, Programme Director. The entire programme is being coordinated by office of EE &C, IIM Jammu.



MD & CEO J&K Bank Baldev Prakash launching Bank's Soft POS and Premium Debit Cards (with Platinum & World variants) at the Zonal Headquarters Jammu.

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Adding further convenience to the digital banking, payments for the people, J&K Bank on Monday unveiled its two new digital products.

MD & CEO Baldev Prakash launched the Bank's Soft POS and Premium Debit Cards (with Platinum & World varithe Zonal Headquarters (Jammu) in presence of Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, General Managers along with Divisional and Zonal Heads besides many senior officials of the bank.

Speaking on the occasion. MD & CEO appreciated the management and workforce of

J&K ANTF nabs two smugglers with heroin

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: To wipe put the menace of drug abuse from society under the program Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan, Anti-Narcotics Task Force (ANTF). a specialized unit of Jammu and Kashmir Police, apprehended two drug peddler and recovered 260 grams heroin from their possession.

As per the handout issued by the ANTF, two smugglers namely Mohd Amin, son of Sadiq Ali, resident of Billawar and Nasir Ali, son of Nazir Ahmad, resident of Nakki Majalta, Udhampur have been apprehended while sitting in a car bearing Registration No JK08M-9794 from Narwal.

The ANTF official said that from their possession 260 grams of heroin was recovered which is a commercial quantity.

The Trap was laid by a team of P/S ANTF Jammu under the guidance of Shamsher Singh, DySP, SHO ANTF Jammu and under overall supervision of SSP ANTF J&K. Rai Kumar.

A case FIR No. 03/24 under Sections 8/21/29 NDPS Act has been registered and investigation started. Inspector Varuneshwar Singh who is investigating the case shall work on forward/backward linkages and shall conduct financial investigation into the matter, it stated. The ANTF Jammu has appealed to the general public, particularly the youth, to stay away from drugs and to share information regarding illicit drugs related activities so that strict legal actions may be taken against such drug dealers. "The identity of the informant as well as whistleblower shall be kept confidential," read the handout.

the Bank for their efforts to continuously enhance customer experience through new digital offerings.

He said, "I feel pleased to see the continuous evolution of our digital offerings which are not only competitive in features and pricing but compare well with the industry in terms of delivery and customer-experience.'

"With unprecedented growth and use of mobile phones in the country, Soft POS will further transform landscape of business payments by making the management of transactions easy, safe and efficient. The operating levels need to undertake efforts to leverage these new products and services for delivery particularly on digital platforms", he added.

"The Banks Soft POS App has been provided with Contactless payment options for MasterCard, Visa and Rupay networks and can accept payments using Debit and Credit Cards", said General Manager (CCB) Narjay Gupta after the launch of Soft POS.

Notably, Soft POS - an innovative technology product - is a mobile app that allows businesses to accept card payments

in contactless-mode directly on their (NFC Enabled) smartphones through a simple tap of the cardholder's contactless credit or a debit card. The App also has a value-added feature for a Cash Register (e-Khata) which can record cash as well as card transactions making it convenient for the merchants not only to maintain a record of all expenses but help them analyse the data to further

scale up their POS operations. In his remarks on the launch of Premium Debit Cards, General Manager (DLM) Syed Shafat Hussain Rufai said, "We have designed two variants of Premium debit cards as per the requirements of the target customer-segment while making them attractively feature-rich.'

Pertinently, the Bank's Premium Debit card variants have higher daily purchase & cash withdrawal limits, besides affording the cardholders with lounge access at select Domestic & International Airports. Moreover, the premium variants also have other attractive features which include free shopping vouchers, discount offers on golf services, Free Wellness App subscription

STATE TIMES NEWS JAMMU: The Central Govt Pensioners' Welfare Association, Jammu is mulling

more initiatives to make the body having huge experienced human resource more vibrant and service to the society. At a meeting, first in the new year, chaired by its President Kuldeep Khoda, some proposals for serving the

society were discussed.

It was decided that former DGP & CVC Kuldeep Khoda, State Election Commissioner & former Chief Secretary B R Sharma, former Director General DRDO, Dr. Sudharshan Kumar and former Director GSI (Geochemistry) H S Sodhi would deliver lectures on specific topics to more than 100 inmates of BALGRAN, Home for destitute children in next two months.

The CGPWA and BALGRAN have agreed to work in unison to upgrade the knowledge of these students. Inclusion of the Divvang students of the Samai Kalvan Kendra, another reputed NGO of J&K dedicated to welfare of deaf & dumb children in these awareness lectures will also be considered to benefit them as well.

Another proposal mooted in the meet-



Former DGP & CVC Kuldeep Khoda addressing meeting of CGPWA.

citizens under Maintenance & Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007 with the help of the Social Welfare Department.

Addressing the members, Khoda referred to the presence of about seventy members in today's meeting despite the chilling cold and said that it showed that the Association has become quite vibrant where issues relating to pensioners related matters are discussed besides organising excursions and musical evenings.

He also referred to the Medical Talks being clubbed with Association's events

and said that these had been found to b useful for elders and would continue this

The Association has been observing national important Days and fortnight programs like Swachhta Abhiyan, Constitution Day, Yoga Diwas etc and playing its role in the society. He referred to some issues of pensioners & allied Body Samaj Kalyan Kendre that were raised with the new Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo at another function last month and said that these would be further discussed with him for resolution after seeking formal appoint-

Earlier, the General Secretary K B Jandial apprised the members that the second CGHS Wellness Centre is being established in Trikuta Nagar which is likely to be functional in two months' time. This has been the long pending demand of the Association. This Wellness Centre which will also have provisions for Ayurveda & Homeopathy Doctors for consultation and medicines for the CGHS beneficiaries The President accompanied by the General Secretary has inspected the building which will house the Wellness Centre. The Union MOS, Ministry of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare & PMO Dr. Jitender Singh & his Pension Deptt have played an important role in restoring the second Wellness Centre to Jammu. The WC was in existence as a Postal Wellness Centre in the past which was merged with CGHS along with over20 other such Wellness Centres across the country. Patron S S Wazir, B R Sharma, Dr

Sudarshan Kumar also spoke on the occasion. The Secretary of CGPWA B B Magotra conducted the function while former IGP and member EC M A Anjum presented a formal vote of

Vikramjit Singh chairs Investor **Facilitation Meet of JKTPO**

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Vikramiit Singh, on Monday chaired an Investor Facilitation Meet at Udhyog Bhawan, here to address the issues and concerns of the industries to whom land has already been allotted by the Government. The agenda of the meet was to resolve the issues and concerns of the industrialists and to ensure that their projects start the production at the earliest. The Investor Facilitation Meet was organised by Jammu & Kashmir Trade Organization (JKTPO) for Investors in both the Divisions of J&K, and this is the eighth meet since March 2023. The primary objective of the meet was to engage with industries who have been allocated the land to understand their challenges, and collaboratively devise effective solutions to accelerate the commencement of operations. It is important to note that 169 units with an investment of Rs. 7,096 crore have been allotted land in different industrial estates and



Comm Secy I&C, Vikramjit Singh chairing an Investor Facilitation Meet at Jammu on Monday.

are setting up their units at various stages. More than 60 Industrialists from both the divisions participated in this meet. Some of the investors also joined the meeting virtually. Commissioner Secretary appreciated JKTPO for hosting such sessions saying that "Focus of the Government is to continue the interface with those investors who have commenced the work on ground and facilitated resolution of their issues to enable commencement of commercial production." Vikramjit Singh, during the session, had one to one discussion with investors regarding the issues faced by them in different areas such as land, power supply, change of land use, availing incentives &

subsidies, infrastructure development, etc.

The meet was attended by Khalid Jahangir, Managing Director, JKTPO, Inderjeet, Managing Director. SIDCO/SICOP, Arun Kumar Manhas, Director, Industries& Commerce Department, Khalid Majeed, Jammu, Industries& Director Department, Commerce Kashmir, Imran Mehmood, FA/CAO, JKTPO and Megha Baogia, General Manager, JKTPO.

Commissioner Secretary noted the grievances projected by the participants and assured that necessary support will be provided to the industries for smooth and hassle-free operations.

2024 ringing alarm for Kashmir economy

Experts link Valley's dry spell climate change, forecast mild winter with less snowfall

■ MASROOR AHMAD

SRINAGAR: Kashmir has been facing a prolonged dry spell for about two month, with minimal chances of significant weather activity until January 20.

New Year eve in Kashmir is normally a time when big snow fills mountains and glaciers are replenished. But this year, most of these resorts and Himalayan and Pirpanjaal mountains across Jammu and Kashmir have little or no snow. The weather is likely to remain dry across Kashmir until January 20.

Experts attribute the issue to a shift in weather patterns, suggesting that the Valley is likely to have a milder winter this year due to the ongoing impact of above -average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean. The Valley will likely experience more frequent and extended droughts in the future, according to experts, who claimed the indicators of climate change are evident in Jammu and Kashmir.

"A periodic sequence of climatic changes that impact parts of the Pacific region, has significantly contributed to the dry spell in Kashmir," Director

Meteorological Department J&K, said. "Drought-like conditions might arise in several parts of Kashmir if precipitation in January stays below normal. This hap-

pens when impact of above -average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean occurs," he

According to the MeT office, this is the longest period without significant snowfall since 2015. He said, "In 2015, the Valley experienced its first major snowfall

He said that if January month passes without snow, 2024 may be tough for farming, tourism and drinking water needs as scant glaciers may not be able to feed rivers and streams for irrigation water throughout the year.

This winter, unseasonably warmer temperatures and little snow are not only being experienced across Jammu and Kashmir but other Himalayan states like HP and Uttarakhand too.

Throughout this winter, so far Gulmarg, Sonamarg, Pahalgam and Yusmarg have seen erratic snowfall, far below the average. The few flurries that did fall quickly melted away, leaving

behind barren slopes and dashed hopes. Due to the ongoing effects of long dry weather and other regional variables, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) had predicted above-normal minimum and maximum temperatures for the December-February period. Consequently, most parts of India are expected to have a less harsh winter this

According to the experts, when sea surface temperatures in the tropical eastern Pacific rise by at least 0.5 degrees Celsius over the long-term average, El Niño is

declared. "The above-normal maximum and minimum temperatures over the country as a whole in December 2023 to February 2024 are mainly attributed to El Niño, where temperatures tend to be higher. Additionally, regional factors like frequent western disturbances will cause cloudiness and low minimum temperatures," IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra recently said

during a press meet. Earth scientist and glaciology experts while endorsing the IMD prognosis, said that the Kashmir valley might experience a mild winter and less snowfall than usual this year.

"As the effects of the present climate changes continue, the Kashmir valley may also see milder winters with lowerthan-average snowfall. This is a different year, when usually brings less snowfall in the Kashmir Himalayas. This causes a long drought as seen in the valley these days," said experts.