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**J&K set record...**

initiatives taken by the government to increase productivity and make the agriculture sector more viable through policy interventions, sustainable practices, advanced technologies, and innovative marketing methods.

"We have successfully secured GI tags for several traditional products, enhancing their market value and ensuring authenticity. Efforts are underway to obtain GI recognition for more local products, boosting the export potential and market visibility of the region," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor commended the SKUAST Jammu for successfully running outreach programme through KVKs and research stations to explore strengths and opportunities in the region.

He directed the University to reinforce its outreach to farmers through direct personal contact, ensuring that research-driven innovations and best practices effectively reach the grassroots level.

Incubation Centre of SKUAST-Jammu has already incubated more than 100 youths and supported 35 startups obtaining support from Union Ministry of Agriculture. Efforts should be further strengthened to drive agricultural transformation and economic growth, he added.

The Lieutenant Governor visited the stalls put up by the farmers, Farmers Producers Organizations and various line departments. He also released a publication "Krishi Adharit Udhyanon ke Madhyam Se: Sashakt aur Smridh Bhavishya ki Kheti" compiled and edited by KVK, Jammu and launched a Mobile App -Radio Kissan SKUAST Jammu 90.8 FM.

The Krishak Mela is aimed to showcase modern agricultural technologies, promote sustainable farming practices and provide a platform for knowledge exchange among farmers, scientists and policymakers.

The facilities inaugurated by the Lieutenant Governor includes: Fully Automated Poultry Production Unit equipped with advanced infrastructure designed to enhance poultry farming efficiency and sustainability including PG Lab on Poultry Research; Sanskriti PG Girls' Hostel; Faculty Club and Residential Quarters.

Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Prof. B N Tripathi, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST Jammu; Dr Amrisha Vaid Director Extension, SKUAST Jammu; Dr Rajesh Katoh Dean, FVSC. & AH SKUAST Jammu, senior officials, HoDs, faculty members and large number of farmers were present.

**HIGHLIGHTS...**

Efforts are underway to obtain GI recognition for more local products, boosting the export potential and market visibility of the region

SDirects University to reinforce its outreach to farmers through direct personal contact, ensuring that research-driven innovations and best practices effectively reach grassroots level

**Over 3.7 lakh...**

He further informed that 12524 selections and appointments have been made during the past two years by the JKPCS and JKSSB in the government sector:

Besides, the Minister informed that 246 job fairs have been organised across J&K in which 4893 job seekers were given on spot placements and 6640 were recommended for different skill training.

**Govt to review...**

that employees sometimes experience delays in receiving their disbursements.

"This occurs when the treasury position becomes constrained. However, we are making every effort to ensure that employees receive their GP funds as quickly as possible," he assured the House.

Informing the House about the status of GP Fund disbursement, the Chief Minister stated that Rs 5,476 crore has been paid as GFP during the 2024-25 financial year.

As the Minister in charge of both Finance and Planning, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah clarified that the allocation of funds-whether for Revenue Expenditure or Capital Expenditure-falls under the purview of the Finance Department in accordance with business rules and statutory norms.

Earlier, while responding to the member's question, he informed the House that funds for all departments in the J&K Government are allocated through the Budget Estimation, Allocation & Monitoring System (BEAMS), which is the most efficient mechanism for real-time fund allocation.

He highlighted that this system has significantly improved efficiency, accountability, and reporting while ensuring effective monitoring of financial resources.

The Chief Minister stated that the Finance Department has been handling the Capex Budget since FY 2019-20.

He further elaborated that IT-enabled platforms such as BEAMS (Budget Estimation, Allocation & Monitoring System), PAYSYS (Payment System), PROOF (Photographic Record of On-site Facility), and Treasury Net have been implemented to enable real-time tracking of resource flow and expenditure, ensuring greater transparency and accountability in public finances.

"Additionally, through the EMPOWERMENT (Enabling Monitoring and Public Overview of Works Executed and Resources for Meaningful Transparency) system / Janbhagidari portal, every citizen has access to track the release of funds from the Finance Department down to the level of the executing/implementing agency. This is the first-of-its-kind system that allows people to oversee works being executed in their areas, with real-time progress monitoring. This initiative serves as a powerful tool for the real empowerment of the general public," he said.

**Govt to assess, address...**

merely an issue of relief but it's a humanitarian concern. Beyond this relief, there are so many other pressing concerns affecting the people in these areas that demand our attention," he asserted. "I urge the members to allow the session to conclude at the earliest. Once the session ends in the first week of April, I will convene a meeting with all the members representing the border and LoC areas," maintained the Chief Minister. We will engage in comprehensive discussions and promptly implement the necessary government actions, he added. Earlier, replying to the main question raised by Vijay Kumar, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, on behalf of Chief Minister, said that land measuring 13415 Kanal in 113 villages of Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts in Jammu division has been acquired by the BSF for Border fencing. The Minister informed that an amount of Rs. 155.08 crore, as compensation, has been provided by the concerned Collectors, out of which, Rs. 144.12 crore have been disbursed among the landowners and remaining amount is under process of title verification.

**Assembly polls cost...**

transport and other contractors is under active consideration of the government," he added. On more than 1.25 lakh employees being required for the elections, Dar said, "To meet this huge requirement, teachers cannot be exempted from election-related duties."

**LA passes grants...**

that enhance productivity, employment and income generation for farmers. He said 3,220 dairy units were established in 2024-25 under Integrated Dairy Development Scheme, generating employment for nearly 5,000 people. Similarly, 2,170 units were set up in 2024-25 under the Integrated Sheep Development Scheme.

Jammu and Kashmir's agriculture sector is experiencing a remarkable transformation under the Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP), delivering tangible results, said the Minister. He extolled that agriculture in the UT is undergoing a transformative shift, from a focus solely on produce to a producer-centric approach. This evolution is driving higher returns for the farmers, nurturing entrepreneurship and creating a more sustainable and commercially viable agricultural ecosystem, he added.

He said that there are 29 projects under HADP, spanning across all sectors within the Agriculture Production Department (APD), driving a fundamental transformation in Jammu & Kashmir's agri-economy.

The Minister highlighted significant strides in horticulture, particularly in the expansion of High-Density (HD) Plantations. The government is developing rootstock banks and mother orchards to support growth of HD plantations across 5,500 hectare under Project 21 of HADP. During 2024-25, the government promoted protected cultivation with 9,083 square meters already developed for rootstock production besides establishment of 45 hectares as mother orchards and cultivating 18.6 hectare for rootstock production, he maintained.

He said that assistance will now be disbursed in three phases, 50 percent after plantation, 30 percent upon sprouting and the final 20 percent after one year; if survival reaches 90 percent, to address setbacks in traditional orchards due to reduced farmer engagement post-financial support.

The Minister said that the government is also launching scientific measures to improve livestock breeding besides implementing Embryo Transfer Technology (ETT) and Artificial Insemination (AI) to enhance the genetic potential in cattle, sheep and goats. He said that 191 satellite heifer rearing units had been established in 2024-25 to reduce dependence on animal imports and improve the quality of dairy animals in J&K. Additionally, 19 milk value-addition SHGs were supported with Rs 25 lakh each, equipping 88 SHGs with automatic milk collection units linked to bulk milk coolers.

Regarding the mutton sector, he informed that four breed-based farms (each housing 500 sheep) and 673 commercial sheep farms had been established during 2024-25 said. Besides, the government is importing 900 high quality Texel and Dorper sheep from

Australia to enhance the meat production.

The Minister said that 210 trout units, 6 Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS) units and 8 biofloc units had been established in 2024-25, to boost fish production, improve livelihoods and promote sustainable aquaculture in J&K. He added that the government is focusing on improving irrigation coverage, promoting climate-resilient cropping and ensuring judicious use of water resources for expanding irrigation infrastructure and enhancing water efficiency in rainfed areas.

He informed that the District Irrigation Plan aims to cover 415,000 hectare of Culturable Command Area (CCA). So far, 191,000 hectare has been covered and efforts are underway to bring an additional 33,000 hectare under irrigation. He said that, to bridge this gap, 18 projects are in progress under UT Capex and 14 new projects worth Rs 48.83 crore have been sanctioned. Also, 20,102 hectare has been brought under irrigation during 2024-25. Over the next three years, an allocation of Rs 116.86 crore will be utilized on establishment of 200 community borewells, integrated with drip and sprinkler irrigation systems to significantly enhance water use efficiency and boost agricultural productivity across 2,000 hectare.

The Minister said that, simultaneously, the Rainfed Area Development (RAD) Project 16 is focused on making rainfed farming more sustainable and climate resilient under HADP. He said that the department through its project on "Promotion of Vegetables and Exotic Vegetables under Open and Hi-Tech Protected Cultivation" is expanding both open-field vegetable cultivation and hi-tech protected farming, ensuring higher yields, better quality and greater market competitiveness.

The Minister revealed that 21 lakh soil health cards had been issued to farmers under the Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme.

He said that currently there are 37 mandis with 24 fully operational and the remaining 13 in various stages of development. Significantly, out of the 19 wholesale mandis, 17 have already been integrated with the e-NAM platform, while the integration of the remaining two is underway. In 2024-25 alone, 54,975 stakeholders were registered on the platform, including 3,634 growers, 72 traders and 108 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs). In 2024-25, a total of 9.44 lakh quintal of agricultural and horticultural produce worth Rs 594 crore, was traded through e-NAM, as compared to 6.55 lakh quintal worth Rs 416 crore in 2023-24, he said.

The Minister said that introduction of the rail network in Kashmir will be a game-changer for the apple growers, significantly reducing freight costs and ensuring better profitability.

"Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP) is a forward-looking initiative being launched with support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)" the Minister said.

Javid Dar said that in J&K, there are 10.82 lakh active KCC accounts, 8.49 lakh for crops and 2.33 lakh for animal husbandry. This year alone, 61,316 new KCCs were issued. The total sanctioned limit stands at 79,726 crore with an outstanding credit of Rs 7,393 crore. The NPA ratios remain low at 4.7% for crops and 2.1% for animal husbandry, reflecting strong credit discipline. In FY 2025-26, we aim to add 1 lakh new KCCs in the crop sector and 2 lakh in Animal Husbandry, he added.

He said that the Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) scheme is also being implemented to promote small food processors, improve value addition and enhance market access. Based on a One District One Product (ODOP) strategy, it offers a 35% credit-linked subsidy up to 10 lakh, and support to SHGs and FPOs. He said upto 2024-25, 1743 applications were cleared by District Committees, with 1,326 sanctioned, 927 disbursed and 1,000 new units targeted for establishment in 2025-26.

In 2024-25, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) provided insurance coverage to 1.48 lakh farmers during Rabi, covering 60,556 hectare and 60,178 farmers in Kharif with 20,561 hectares insured. To further enhance climate risk coverage, the Restructured Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) is being implemented for the first time in J&K during 2025-26. He said that for the first time, apple, saffron, mango and litchi will be covered under the Restructured Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS), the Minister emphasised.

He said that seven unique agricultural products from J&K have been granted the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) Tag by the Government of India, reinforcing their authenticity, heritage and market value. These included Saffron, Basmati, Baderwah Rajnash, Mushkbadji Rice, Udampur Kaladi, Ramban Sulai Honey and Ramban Anardana. In continuation, GI tagging for 17 more crops shall be processed during 2025-26.

"In a major push to the dairy economy, 4,000 new dairy units will be established across the Union Territory this year, creating employment for over 7,000 youth and further strengthening our milk production and processing infrastructure", the Minister emphasised.

"Under the Integrated Sheep Development Scheme, we will set up 2,500 new sheep and goat units. Simultaneously, through the Integrated Poultry Development Program, 1,000 new entrepreneurs will receive financial support to establish modern broiler, layer and free-range poultry units along with processing facilities", the Minister maintained.

"100 more satellite heifer rearing units will be established to ensure availability of superior dairy animals within J&K. Besides, 900 Texel and Dorper sheep shall be imported by June 2025 and 900 high-quality Swiss Alpine and Boer goats shall be imported during the current financial year. About 40 high-quality breeding bulls from the USA and 100 elite Jersey cows will be imported to strengthen our genetic base during this year," the Minister informed.

"The Government is set to bring 22,933 hectares under assured irrigation during 2025-26. To support this, 18 projects are in progress under UT loan and 14 new projects worth Rs 48.83 crore have been sanctioned. This will bridge critical gaps and make farming more secure and productive," Javid Dar informed.

"Four new Agri-Mandis will be established in Samba, Reasi, Kishtwar, and Bandipora, supported by a dedicated Market Intelligence Cell and Agri Branding Centers for global positioning of J&K produce. Further, projects for upgrading infrastructure at 5 mega mandis viz Sopore, Shopian, Narwal, Jablipora and Parimpora would be initiated," the Minister maintained.

He said that a capital allocation of Rs 377 crore has been earmarked during 2025-26 for infrastructure development through NABARD in agriculture and allied sectors, ushering in a new era of rural modernization.

The Minister said that the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Gramin) - PMAY scheme has been a cornerstone of our efforts to provide housing security to the rural poor; transforming lives by replacing kuccha and dilapidated houses with Pucca homes equipped with basic amenities. He said that the detailed survey under PMAY 2.0 will be completed by the end of March 2025. As on date, more than 3.36 lakh beneficiaries have been included in the survey across all 20 districts.

He said that with this relaxed criteria, the matter has been taken up with MoRD for inclusion of daily wagers.

Javid Dar said that there are over 23.59 lakh registered workers, with 15.52 lakh actively engaged in meaningful work under MGNREGA in J&K. The scheme has not only provided wages but also created vital infrastructure that has transformed rural landscapes. For FY 2025-26, 3,13, 567 works have been identified which included proposed 80,000 new PMAY (G) works as proposed target with an outlay of Rs. 187.38 crore, he added.

"The government intends to generate 395 lakh person-days of employment, ensuring that every rural household has access to livelihood opportunities and a total of 8,239 projects have been identified under the UT Convergence Plan, in collaboration with 19 Departments and other Rural Development schemes", the Minister informed.

The Minister said that J&K has achieved a historic milestone by becoming 100% Open Defecation Free (ODF+) UT under Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G) Phase I and II. He said that 30,000 IHHL units, 2,744 Community Sanitary Complexes and 16 GOBARdhan plants shall be established, making our villages cleaner, greener and more sustainable.

Regarding J&K Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM)-UMBED, the Minister said that over 90,000 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have been formed, transforming rural women into entrepreneurs. He said that the Lakhpati Didi initiative has identified 1.63 lakh potential Lakhpati households, ensuring that these women become role models for economic prosperity in their communities.

Under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSAA), the government is committed towards building the capacity of Panchayati Raj Institutions to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring that every Panchayat becomes a center of excellence in governance and development. He said under the scheme during the current financial year, 330 Panchayat Ghars have already been completed, while 500 new Panchayat Ghars will be constructed in the financial year 2025-26.

Under UT CAPEX- CD Panchayat, the Minister said that a total of 88 buildings have been planned, comprising 24 BDC offices, 20 DDC offices and 20 DDC residential buildings. So far, 31 buildings have been completed including 28 BDC offices, 2 DDC offices and 1 DDC residential building.

Similarly, the Minister said that the Department is targeting to train 9084 candidates and ensure placement of 3011 candidates in various jobs in the FY-2025-26 under HIMAYAT (Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana).

He said that through its Sahakar se Samridhi or prosperity through Cooperation, 24 new initiatives were taken towards revival of Co-operatives. Presently 4340 functional Cooperative Societies/Cooperatives have been registered in versatile fields like dairy, poultry, agriculture, consumer, health, housing, education etc. He said that 537 identified PACS of J&K are being computerized under this scheme with a total cost of Rs 17.05 crore. Besides, computerization of offices, establishment of Micro Food Processing Units for creating employment opportunities, especially in rural areas has been launched by the Cooperative Department.

The Minister added that the Jammu & Kashmir aims to strengthen its cooperative

ecosystem, promote inclusive growth and align local efforts with the broader objectives of IYC 2025, reinforcing the cooperative model as a key driver of social and economic progress.

The cut motions on Demands for Grants were withdrawn by the MLAs.

Legislators, Sajad Shaheen, Payare Lal Sharma, Surjeet Singh Salathia, Javed Beigh, Nizamuddin Bhat, Mubarak Gul, Rafiq Ahmad Naik, Qaysar Jamshed Lone, Sham Lal Sharma, Sajad Gani Lone, Showkat Hussain Ganie, Nazir Ahmed Khan Gurezi, Shabir Ahmad Kullay, Gharu Ram Bhagat, Hasnain Masoodi, Farooq Ahmad Shah, Ghulam Mohi Din Mir, Irshad Rasool Kar, Dr. Narindra Singh, Javid Riyaz Bedar, Shakti Raj Parihar, Surandir Kumar Bhagat, G A Mir, Arjun Singh Raju, Mian Mehar Ali, Dr Rajiv Kumar Bhagat, Sheikh Kuresheed Ahmad, Hilal Akbar Lone, Irfan Hafiz Lone, Satish Kumar Sharma, Mahraj Malik, Waheed-ur-Rahman Parra, Davinder Kumar Maniyal and Dr Rameshwar Singh spoke on the Demand for Grants and put forth their views and suggestions.

Later, the House passed the Demand for Grants moved by Javed Ahmad Dar by voice-vote.

**Order to verify...**

Conference member Mir Saifullah, he clarified that the verification process aimed to include genuine beneficiaries and exclude undeserving ones to meet the targeted goals of the PDS. Under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana of the National Food Security Act, which targets the "poorest of the poor", 35 kilograms of foodgrains are distributed per family per month while Priority Households receive five kilograms per person per month, Sharma noted.

**Corps Commander reviews...**

operational readiness and modalities.

The GOC praised the forces and urged all ranks to maintain high morale and professionalism to face future challenges.

**Over 3 lakh houses...**

allotted to mitigate the difficulties being faced by landless to avail the facility.

In a separate written reply to an unstarred question by National Conference legislator Khurshid Ahmad, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said 1,288 houses were gutted in separate fire incidents across J-K over the past two years.

While 574 houses were gutted in 2023-24, the number increased to 714 in 2024-25, Abdullah, who is also minister in-charge disaster management, relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction department said.

He said the maximum 107 houses were gutted in Kishtwar district, 97 Kupwara, 64 Kulgam, 61 Anantnag, 56 Srinagar, 52 Budgam, 51 Baramulla, 47 Ramban, 36 Bandipora, 20 Doda, 21 Shopian, 17 each Pulwama and Udampur; 16 Rajouri, 15 Reasi, 12 Poonch, 11 Ganderbal, seven Samba and six Jammu in the FY 2024-25.

Similarly in 2023-24, the maximum 91 houses were gutted in Srinagar; 76 Kupwara, 71 Anantnag, 68 Baramulla, 48 Bandipora, 30 Budgam, 27 Ramban, 25 Kulgam, 21 Kishtwar, 20 Pulwama, 18 Poonch, 14 each Udampur and Jammu, 11 each Shopian and Rajouri, eight Ganderbal, five Kathua and two Reasi.

An amount of Rs 1.30 lakh is given as compensation for completely gutted houses under SDRF norms, he said.

**Carbine magazines, grenades...**

Police chief Prabhat, who rushed to the spot immediately after getting information about the presence of the terrorists, was seen leading from the front deep inside the forested area this afternoon.

Holding an AK assault rifle, he was seen directing the operation from the ground.

One input suggested that two groups of at least five terrorists each had infiltrated.

Local villagers, meanwhile, organised a community kitchen for reporters and the security personnel at the outer cordon.

According to the officials, some village women collecting firewood reported seeing around five terrorists who had sought refuge in the expansive nursery area.

Anita Devi, a 48-year-old villager, said heavily armed terrorists caught hold of her husband when they were at the nursery to collect firewood.

"The terrorists held my husband at gunpoint and asked me to come close. But my husband signalled me to run and I ran. One of the terrorists tried to stop me but I started shouting, attracting the attention of two more people who were cutting grass," she told PTI.

She said the incident occurred around 4:30 pm on Sunday and they all returned home and informed the police. They had beards and were wearing commando uniform, Anita Devi said.

District Development Councillor Karan Kumar also said heavy gunfire was heard in the region. "An atmosphere of fear has gripped the village by the presence of the terrorists. We heard around 250 rounds of gunfire," Kumar said, adding security forces had encircled the entire area to flush out the terrorists.

**JSC project: Over...**

been resolved. The DDN plates are being installed as part of the government plan to geo-tag and assign the unique number to every household and commercial property. Similarly, 300 complaints relating to e-Buses operation, ticketing, misbehavior by driver or conductor were received and in 285 cases penalties on defaulting persons or agencies were imposed, he said. He said 16 complaints with regard to construction of table top crossings, water logging at Panama Chowk, drains in Gandhi Nagar and Bharat Nagar near Poonch House, non functioning of decorative poles light, installation of poles in front of shops at residency road, disruption of traffic during to construction of gates at Indira chowk and Raghunath Bazar and transfer of funds were received and resolved.

**Jal Shakti Deptt dismisses 5, disengages 10 employees over NDPS-related cases**

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

JAMMU: In a decisive action sending a strong message of zero tolerance to the perpetrators of the scourge of narcotics afflicting the society, particularly its young, the Jal Shakti Department has dismissed five permanent employees and disengaged ten temporary staff linked to offenses under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

The action was taken under Article 311 of the Constitution of India to uphold discipline and ensure accountability within the department.

These employees were served show-cause notices, their responses were reviewed and before the decision to dismissal or disengagement was finalized, thorough inquiries were conducted.

The Jal Shakti Department stated that the action reflects the department's zero-tolerance policy toward unlawful activities and emphasized that government employees involved in drug-related offenses not only tarnish the department's reputation but also undermine public trust. The department remains committed to ensuring a professional and accountable workforce and has pledged to continue strict monitoring to prevent any such incidents in the future.

**Army organizes employment fair for ex-servicemen, dependents**

**■ STATE TIMES NEWS**

POONCH: As a prelude to the upcoming Rajouri Day celebrations, the Indian Army organized a highly successful employment fair at Poonch, exclusively for ex-



servicemen and their dependents.

The event, held at Poonch, witnessed an overwhelming response from the ex-servicemen community, with 25 participants benefiting from the job fair. The employment fair provided a platform for ex-servicemen and their dependents to interact with renowned companies and explore job opportunities in various sectors.

Over 10 companies participated in the job fair, offering a range of job opportunities in various sectors.

The event offered job opportunities in various positions, ranging from senior supervisors to strategic planners and project directors.

Various entrepreneurship models were also presented by corporate companies during the job fair, providing ex-servicemen and their dependents with opportunities for self-employment.