

Nuclear Energy critical for India's Net Zero goal: Dr Jitendra

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NEW DELHI: Addressing a post-budget webinar organized by NITI Aayog, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences, and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasised that Nuclear Energy is critical for India's Net Zero goal.

He highlighted the Union Budget 2024-25's vision for India's nuclear power expansion, which sets a target of achieving 100 GW by 2047.

Pointing out the crucial role of nuclear energy in India's transition to clean energy and achieving Net Zero emissions by 2070, he called for private sector participation, regulatory reforms, and sustained public engagement.

Highlighting the growing energy demand, Dr. Jitendra Singh stated that India's electricity needs are expected to increase four to five times by 2047. While renewable energy sources are expanding, they alone cannot meet the base-load demand, making nuclear power a key component of India's energy



strategy. "Achieving 100 GW of nuclear power will require a focused and determined approach, adding around 4 GW annually from now onwards," he said, expressing confidence in meeting the goal with proper planning and execution.

A major shift in India's nuclear policy is the proposed involvement of the private sector in designing, building, and operating nuclear power plants. Dr. Jitendra Singh acknowledged that legislative amendments to the Atomic Energy Act, Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, and Electricity Act would be required to enable this participation. "Opening up the nuclear sector will send a strong policy signal to industry players, boosting investor confidence and encouraging long-term investments," he

noted. He also highlighted that NPCIL, along with its subsidiaries, aims to contribute nearly half of the 100 GW target by leveraging domestic and international partnerships. Meanwhile, NTPC's joint venture, Ashwini, has already taken the lead in constructing four 700 MWe PHWRs at Mahi-Banswara.

The Minister further announced the launch of a Small Modular Reactor (SMR) R&D Mission, with the objective of developing five SMRs by 2033. These reactors, known for their adaptability, could be deployed in industrial zones, remote areas, and hard-to-abate sectors like cement and steel manufacturing.

Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized that India's nuclear energy journey, pioneered by Dr. Homi Bhabha, was often met with scepticism, both domestically and internationally, due to restrictive global policies and misplaced concerns over nuclear proliferation. However, he noted that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership since 2014, India has witnessed a paradigm shift, with greater acceptance of its nuclear energy program as a key compo-

nent of clean and sustainable power generation. He pointed out that unlike in the past, the announcement of a 100 GW nuclear target has not faced any negative implications, reflecting India's growing credibility in the global nuclear community and the recognition of its responsible and transparent approach to nuclear energy development.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also underscored the need for a nationwide awareness campaign to address public concerns regarding

nuclear energy. "A much more vigorous and sustained public outreach program is necessary to dispel fears and highlight nuclear power as a safe and clean energy source," he said, urging collaboration among government agencies, private players, and environmental groups.

With a roadmap now being formulated in consultation with stakeholders, the Minister affirmed that while challenges exist, achieving the 100 GW target by 2047 is both ambitious and achievable.



NABARD Projects Rs 43,297.01 Cr Credit Potential for J&K's Priority Sector in 2025-26

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: In a significant boost to inclusive growth and rural development, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has projected an estimated credit potential of Rs 43,297.01 crore under the priority sector for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for the financial year 2025-26. The announcement was made during the UT Credit Seminar organized by NABARD on March 4, 2025, in Jammu.

The seminar was presided over by Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, and attended by Chandrasekhar Azad, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India, and Amitava Chatterjee, MD & CEO, J&K Bank, along with other distinguished guests.

Welcoming the participants, Bhallanudi Sridhar, Chief General Manager (CGM), NABARD, J&K Regional Office, underscored



CS Atal Dulloo and others during the seminar in Jammu on Tuesday.

NABARD's pivotal role in shaping the development landscape of Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized the bank's strategic approach to boosting agricultural credit through meticulous planning, monitoring, and collaboration with multiple stakeholders.

As part of this vision, NABARD will focus on promoting Farmers Producer Organizations (FPOs) and Farmers' Collectives, enhancing horticulture crops such as walnut, saffron, and apple, and strengthening handloom and handicraft sectors through Off-Farm Producer Organizations

(OFPOs), marketing support, and Geographical Indication (GI) registration. Additionally, computerization of Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS) is planned to improve efficiency and transparency in rural credit systems.

Delivering his keynote address, Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, appreciated NABARD's efforts in assessing credit potential and publishing the UT Focus Paper. He highlighted emerging economic opportunities in agriculture, MSME, and tourism sectors, urging banks to extend their

reach to all Panchayats and provide loans to all eligible farmers under the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme. He also stressed the importance of timely repayment of loans and encouraged banks to actively participate in the "YUVA" scheme while ensuring collaboration on infrastructure projects across the Union Territory.

As part of the event, Atal Dulloo released two important NABARD publications. The first, "Transforming the Rural Landscape of J&K and Ladakh", is a compendium showcasing NABARD's initiatives in rural development.

The second, "Indicative Unit Cost for Investment in Agriculture and Allied Activities for 2025-26", serves as a comprehensive guide for potential investors in the agriculture and allied sectors of the UT. These booklets are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, financial institutions, and aspiring entrepreneurs in rural industries.

The seminar provided a crucial platform for stakeholders to discuss financial inclusivity and economic growth strategies in Jammu and Kashmir. NABARD reaffirmed its commitment to accelerating rural transformation and ensuring sustainable development in the region.

Concluding the event, Vikas Mittal, General Manager, NABARD, expressed gratitude to the UT Government and other stakeholders for their support and assured that NABARD would work diligently to achieve the targets set forth by the Chief Guest.

DPR for Keran-Jumgund tunnel to be prepared, taken up with MORTH: Dy CM

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JAMMU: The Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary said that the demand for construction of tunnel on the road connecting Keran and Jumgund area of Kupwara for providing all weather connectivity will be taken up with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India. He said DPR would also be prepared and forwarded to concerned.



Dy CM Surinder Choudhary replying to a question in JK Assembly session in Jammu Tuesday.

The Deputy Chief Minister was replying to a question raised by Mir Saifullah on Tuesday.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that Keran sector is connected with the rest of UT of J&K via Pharkiyani Gali to Keran road (46.76 Km), maintained by BRO.

He further said that the road remains partially closed during the winter season due to snow accu-

mulation and regular snow clearance is being done by BRO for providing connectivity to Keran sector. "The PMGSY Road Z i r h a m a - J u m g u n d (length 25.00 km) is a high-altitude road. Snow clearance operations though carried out regularly but during heavy snow spells clearance operation becomes difficult beyond first 6 km and gets temporarily delayed

till weather improves due to poor visibility, frost action, avalanches/ snow slides from upper reaches, especially in kms from 17th to 20th", he added.

The Deputy Chief Minister further informed that no alternate roads are available at present for the Keran and Jumgund areas. He said Pharkiyani Gali to Keran (46.76 Km) road is maintained by BRO.

LG meets young influencer; releases books

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday met young influencer from Jammu Baby Mahira Tondon, at Raj Bhawan. The Lieutenant Governor congratulated the 6-year-old Mahira Tondon for her exceptional achievements in various dance and talent-hunt competitions and extended best wishes for her future endeavours.

Meanwhile, Dr Abhijeet Jasrotia, BJP Spokesperson also called on Lieutenant Governor and expressed gratitude to him for his visionary leadership and people-centric policy framework, emphasising the strategic significance of Lieutenant Governor's address to the J&K Legislative Assembly in laying a robust foundation for J&K's economic resurgence and holistic development.

He further discussed with the Lieutenant Governor various issues of public importance including Urban



(L To R) Young influencer of Jammu Baby Mahira Tondon and veteran journalist & writer O.P Sharma meeting LG Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan.

Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj elections in J&K. LG Manoj Sinha also released a book titled 'Rishton Ke

Bheeghe Akhbaar (Ghazal Sangrah)' written by Dr Anila Singh Charak. The Lieutenant Governor congratulat-

ed the author and wished her success in the future literary endeavours.

He also released a book titled 'Jammu: A Land of Heritage and Legends, Volume-I', authored by Ajay Khajuria, Professor of Practice at MIET, Jammu.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated and extended his best wishes to the author. The book offers deep insights into Jammu's vibrant heritage, traditions, and architectural marvels.

Meanwhile, the Lieutenant Governor was presented with a book authored by O.P. Sharma, veteran journalist and writer. The title of the book is "Doyens of Dogri Literature". The Lieutenant Governor congratulated the author and complimented him on his contribution to the literary world. The book serves as a tribute to luminaries of Dogri literature and Sahitya Akademi Awardees and highlights their pivotal role in promotion of Dogri language.

Crime, drug addiction, corruption great challenges: former Mayor 'From LG, Union Ministers to PM; we will meet all for relief to Jammu people'

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Prominent of the former Councillors of Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC), irrespective of their political affiliations, sat together on Tuesday and discussed the vital issues being faced by the people of Jammu.

The meeting was chaired by senior BJP leader, former Mayor and former General Secretary of All India Mayors' Council Rajinder Sharma.

The former elected representatives of the Urban Local Body expressed serious concern over the vital issues, including shattered work culture in JMC, increase in crime in the city, sudden rise in addiction among the youth, corruption among government officials, especially in the Revenue and Mining departments and other such burning issues of Jammu.

The former Councillors said that it be street lights, revenue collection, lanes and drains, garbage disposal, cleanliness and sanitation, water and power supply, building permissions, condition of graveyards, blockage clearance of sewerage pits in the city, crematoriums cleanliness, menace of stray dogs and



Former Mayor and former General Secretary of All India Mayors' Council Rajinder Sharma along with other prominent personalities during the meeting in Jammu on Tuesday.

other animals, hanging wires and damaged-tilted electric poles and other day-to-day activities-there is a steep downfall in work culture and there is no accountability since tenure of JMC got over in November, 2023. People are moving from pillar to post for getting the works done but none is paying any heed.

Addressing the meeting, Rajinder Sharma said that after the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, the government led by Prime Minister

Narendra Modi has brought in lot of development and changes in the lives of people of the Union Territory, which have been implemented here successfully by the administration led by Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha.

"But certain elements in government are hell bent to sabotage the positive achievements of the government and LG led administration by resorting to red-tapism, corruption, delay tactics, having poor public connect etc," he maintained.

The BJP leader said that the elected Councillors had no administrative skills but still most of the public grievances were resolved by their positive role but presently when the system is being helmed by the well trained administrators as bureaucrats, there is distress among the public and mess is increasing with every passing day while the same staff was there at work and now too it is also the same staff.

"In our tenure 92,000 street lights were installed in Jammu and those were

well maintained also but now public is suffering as many of these lights are damaged and there is none to correct them," he continued. That was time when department used to call the complainant for street light rectification but now complainant is calling to deaf ears. That shows lack of commitment, accountability and 'who cares' attitude on the part of JMC.

Sharma also said that when the elected body was at the helm, budget of JMC was increased from Rs. 25 crore to 152 crore in 2023

due to which immense developments took place but today there is no money for completing the works and the contractors are not paid for long.

"In our tenure budget was executing developmental works in the month of May itself while now same is not being done in the month of November or December, Sharma said.

He said that the biggest achievement then was Bagh-e-Bahu corridor, which is now not being properly maintained and even cleanliness is not

proper there.

The BJP leader said that even revenue collection has drastically fallen presently.

"Revenue generated from hoardings, NOCs has steeply reduced and same is the case of Building Permissions, which are being given illegally further putting JMC accounts to losses," the former Mayor asserted, adding that the officials are listening to none and the entire system appears to be collapsed.

No fresh tender for sewerage blockage cleanse has been called due to which public is suffering. Water tankers are supplying water to affluent but poor helpless needy is waiting endlessly for his turn, he added.

"Crime has touched new skies and the Patwaries are not moving even an inch till their palms are greased", he said and demanded white paper on status of State Land, especially for Supwal, Vijaypur, Bari Brahmana, Balol Nalla running from Sunjwan to Marh and on both sides of Ring Road. He sought all encroachments of Nazool, Ghas Charai, Custodian and Khads to be removed. He said development by PM Modi in J&K have raised the land prices here

which have activated the land mafia for grabbing the state lands and khads, nal-lahs, area adjoining ring road etc have been encroached and for all this Patwaries, Naib Tehsildars and Tehsildars should be held accountable.

"Why the same Inspectors are being posted as SHOs in prominent Police Stations of Jammu," he asked, adding that in coming days they will meet Lieutenant Governor, Union Ministers and even PM with all these issues.

Former Mayor and Councillors thanked Raj Daluja Ji, who while acknowledging seriousness of the problem of water supply through tankers, donated a water tanker for supplying water to needy and poor citizens of Jammu. He said he has always been in forefront for welfare and cause of Jammuites.

Prominent among those present in the meeting were Anil Kumar, Kapil Chib, Pramod Kapahi, Ashok Singh Manhas, Tripta Devi, Teerath Kour, Anu Bali, Gorav Chopra, Sunita Gupta, Ghar Singh Chib, Rashpal Bhardwaj, Neelam Nargotra, Rani Devi, Sobat Ali, Anita Sharma, Ashwani Sharma and others.