

J&K Admin committed to build stronger farm economy, increasing rural employment: LG



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha visiting a stall.

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday addressed the closing Ceremony of Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan at SKUAST Kashmir's Mountain Research Centre for Field Crops at Khudwani-Kulgam.

In his address, the Lieutenant Governor commended the valuable contribution of everyone associated with the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan for marking a transformative step, through this initiative, toward building a resilient, modern, and prosperous agricultural landscape in the Union Territory.

"Our ultimate goal is to make every farmer in J&K UT a proud stakeholder in India's journey toward becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047.

Let us walk together towards a future where every field blooms with prosperity, every farmer thrives with dignity and every village becomes a symbol of development. With Sankalp (resolve) comes Shakti (strength) and with Shakti comes Vikas (development)," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor reiterated the commitment of J&K Administration, under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to

build a stronger farm economy, increasing rural employment opportunities and enhancing farmer's income

J&K had launched similar initiative in 2022 through Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP), the first revolutionary program in agriculture in any state or UT in recent times. It is a comprehensive strategy, designed to make J&K UT a robust Rs. 1 trillion agricultural economy by 2030, he said.

The Lieutenant Governor, in his address, highlighted several targeted initiatives taken by the Administration for the upliftment of the forest-dwelling tribal communities and those engaged in agriculture and allied sectors. He said, the J&K also has a special focus on the development of our tribal farming communities, Gujjars, Bakarwals, Paharis, and other STs, who are the custodians of our forests, mountains and traditional wisdom.

"The active participation from every district in Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan reflects our collective commitment to a self-reliant J&K.

Let us continue this spirit of progress and partnership to ensure sustainable growth and improved livelihoods for our farming com-

- ▶ LG addresses closing ceremony of Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan (VKSA) at Khudwani-Kulgam
- ▶ Says, VKSA marks transformative step toward building a resilient, modern, and prosperous agricultural landscape in UT
- ▶ Our ultimate goal is to make every farmer in J&K proud stakeholder in India's journey toward becoming a Viksit Bharat by 2047
- ▶ Let us walk together towards future where every field blooms with prosperity, every farmer thrives with dignity and every village becomes a symbol of development. With Sankalp (resolve) comes Shakti (strength) and with Shakti comes Vikas (development)
- ▶ J&K had launched similar initiative in 2022 through HADP, first revolutionary program in agriculture in any state or UT in recent times. It is a comprehensive strategy, designed to make J&K UT a robust Rs. 1 trillion agricultural economy by 2030
- ▶ J&K also has special focus on the development of our tribal farming communities, Gujjars, Bakarwals, Paharis, and other STs, who are the custodians of our forests, mountains and traditional wisdom. We have taken several targeted initiatives for their upliftment
- ▶ Extension of benefits under PM Fasal Bima Yojana to Farmers associated with Horticulture Sector should be taken up on priority
- ▶ Active participation from every district in VKSA reflects our collective commitment to a self-reliant J&K

munities," the Lieutenant Governor further said. The occasion also marked the beginning of transplantation of rice.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon officials and scientists to ensure that the awareness, reforms and outreach achieved through this campaign become embedded in our systems and governance frameworks.

"Let this Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan not just end in ceremonies and reports, but continue to resonate in our policies, partnerships, and priorities," the Lieutenant Governor said. Progressive farmers shared their success stories and expressed gratitude to the Lieutenant Governor led J&K Administration for the support and hand-holding.

Responding to the issues raised by the farmers, the Lieutenant Governor asked the Agriculture Minister J&K for addressing the issue of the extension of

benefits under PM Fasal Bima Yojana to Farmers associated with the Horticulture Sector on priority.

The Lieutenant Governor also launched various initiatives and publications of SKUAST Kashmir and handed over sanctioned letters to farmers from tribal communities under different schemes. He also congratulated the Mountain Research Centre for Field Crops for the development of 20 rice varieties keeping in mind the agro-ecology of Kashmir.

A Two- minute silence was observed in the memory of citizens who lost their lives in the Pahalgam Terror Attack.

Through the Viksit Krishi Sankalp Abhiyan, farmers are being educated on advanced agricultural research tailored to their specific area's needs. In J&K, this campaign has successfully reached over

2.80 lakh farmers, providing crucial information on low-cost, high-production, and more sustainable and profitable modern agricultural techniques, resources, and schemes.

Javid Ahmad Dar, Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj; Sakina Itoo, Minister for Education, Health & Medical Education and Social Welfare; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Prof Nazir Ah. Ganai, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST Kashmir, VK Birdi, IGP Kashmir, scientists, experts, faculty, students and members from farming community were present.

Mohd Afzal Parray, Chairman, DDC Kulgam; Members of Legislative Assembly, HoDs, and prominent citizens from all walks of life were also present.



Israel's military apologises for incorrect depiction of India's map

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JERUSALEM: The Israeli military on Saturday apologised for posting a map that incorrectly depicted Jammu and Kashmir as part of Pakistan after objections from Indian social media users, clarifying that the image "fails to precisely depict borders".

The map was posted by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) on their X handle on Friday to show the range of Iranian missiles. The post quickly drew criticism from social media users in India.

"Now you understand why

India remains neutral. In diplomacy, no one's really your friend," one user commented on X.

In response, the IDF admitted that the map "fails to precisely depict borders".

"This post is an illustration of the region. This map fails to precisely depict borders. We apologize for any offense caused by this image," IDF said on X.

"Iran is a global threat. Israel is not the end goal, it's only the beginning. We had no other choice but to act," the IDF earlier posted along with the incorrect map, justifying the launch of Operation Rising Lion against Iran.

The Israeli Air Force also posted a short video carrying a similar map, showing the range of the Iranian missiles.

In response to the controversy, Israeli Ambassador to India Reuven Azar on X described the map as "bad unintended" infographics.

He said he had already asked to get the map removed/fixed.

India has consistently maintained that Jammu and Kashmir, along with Ladakh, is an integral part of the country.

Ujh Multipurpose Project being revived, surplus water not for Pakistan: Dr Jitendra

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: In a major decision, the Central Government has revived the long-pending Ujh Multipurpose Project in district Kathua of Jammu & Kashmir.

The revised Detailed Project Report (DPR) will be prepared by the Ministry of Jal Shakti in close coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs, keeping in view the strategic and security implications of the project. Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, who also represents the Udhampur-Kathua-Doda Lok Sabha constituency, shared the development with media today. He emphasized that the reoriented project will ensure surplus water from the Ujh River—tributary of Ravi—is fully utilized within India, specifically in Jammu & Kashmir and neighbouring states like Punjab and Haryana, preventing it from flowing into Pakistan.

The Ujh project, declared a National Project in 2008, had remained dormant for decades. Investigations on the project date back near-



ly a century. Dr. Singh has been vigorously pursuing the project since his first election in 2014. Delays were caused by escalating costs and challenges in optimally utilizing surplus water.

The revival gains added importance following the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty, after recent terror incidents including the April 22 Pahalgam attack, which martyred 25 tourists and a local resident.

The Ministry of Home Affairs is now actively involved, viewing the project as a means to bolster surveillance along riverine infiltration routes, particularly in the Billawar region, reportedly used by terrorists entering from Pakistan. The revised DPR will focus on enhancing

irrigation potential, generating power, and strengthening national security. Earlier estimates indicated irrigation benefits to over 76,269 hectares, a figure likely to be re-evaluated under the new plan. The project will also help mitigate the annual flooding that affects the region. Dr. Singh highlighted the multiple benefits of the revived project—enhanced agricultural productivity, power generation, and strategic security.

He also pointed to indirect advantages like promotion of tourism and infrastructure development, which can unlock new livelihood opportunities and boost the regional economy.

He further noted that while the Indus Water Treaty allocated waters of Eastern rivers like Ravi to India, much of the Ujh's flow remained underutilized due to past inaction. With the revived project, India intends to fully leverage its water rights, strengthen its border management, and usher in a new era of development for Kathua and adjoining areas.

Omar-led Govt committed for revival, boosting Industrial Growth in J&K: Dy CM

Rattan Lal demands immediate release of due incentives to Local Industrialists

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: A mega industrial convention was organised on Saturday by Vikram Puri, Chairman of the Trade and Industries Wing, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), to highlight the concerns of the business and industrial community of Jammu region. The event saw participation from a wide cross-section of industrialists and business leaders from across Jammu region, including Digiana, Bari Brahmana, Samba, Kathua, Udhampur and Ghatti. On the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, who also holds the portfolios of Industries & Commerce, Roads and Buildings, Labour & Employment, Skilled Development, was the chief guest. The programme was chaired by Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President JKNC.

During the event, members of various industrial associations namely Ajit Bawa President Kathua Association, Varinder Jain President Gangyal Association, Lalit Mahajan President Bari Brahmana Association, TS Reen Ex President Gangyal Association, Anil Suri Ex President Bari Brahmana, Sunil Verma Industrialist Udhampur, Sanjay Puri, P Mark Industry, Abhi Bansal Saraswati Agro, Anshul Gulati Gulati Oil Mills and Rohit Sehora Association of Industries Samba raised long-standing issues confronting them and also suggested measures overcome the issues. In his address, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary gave a patient hearing to the concerns raised by the stakeholders. He assured the gathering that the Omar Abdullah-led government is fully committed to the growth and protection of local industries in Jammu and Kashmir. He acknowledged the dismal state of industrial development in



Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary with traders and NC leaders at industrial convention at Jammu on Saturday.

the region and said the government would ensure that all due benefits and incentives under their control as UT are released promptly. The Dy CM reiterated the government's resolve to develop a business-friendly environment and take immediate steps to restore investor confidence, create jobs, and promote both industrial and tourism sectors in a holistic manner. He further assured that more and more local youths will be absorbed in new Industries established onwards. Rattan Lal Gupta stated that the establishment of a single industrial unit can generate employment for hundreds, yet the region's potential has been ignored. He said due to lack of interest and negligence of the previous regime, over 60% industrial units in Jammu and Kashmir are on the verge of closure. He particularly criticised the Central Government for failing to release GST benefits and other financial incentives to local industries, thereby stifling their growth.

Rattan Gupta also questioned the outcome of the Rs 85,000 crore MoU signed by the LG Sinha led administration for industrial development and employment generation.

He asked where the promised industries and jobs were and why the benefits were not visible on the ground. He alleged that the recent allotment of industrial land was done in haphaz-

ardly manner and ignored local entrepreneurs. He further blamed the previous BJP-led government for failing to develop Jammu's tourism sector, citing the neglect of tourist destinations such as Patnitop, Mansar, Puthu Beach in Kathua. The Provincial President also expressed concern that the Kashmir Rail Connectivity would also pose a threat to Jammu's industrial economy if local industries are not protected and incentivised. He appealed to the central government to announce a special, comprehensive package for new Industries and also industrial revival package for Jammu to safeguard the region's economy.

Arun Gupta, President CCI Jammu expressed concern over the lack of commercial infrastructure in Jammu, noting that no new commercial market has been developed in the last 28 years except for Bahu Plaza.

He criticised the Smart City initiative, alleging that its funds are being wasted on renovation of already developed areas instead of creating new commercial hubs that could help boost trade and employment. He also urged the Govt to develop the pilgrimage sites falling in Jammu division.

Prominent among those who were present in the mega event included Sheikh Bashir Ahmad Provincial Secretary, Binla Luthra former MLA, Pardeep Bali Provincial Secretary

Jammu, Vijay Lochan Chairman SC Cell, Abdul Gani Teli Chairman OBC Cell, D.S Chouhan President Legal Cell, S.

Tejinder Singh Provincial President YNC Jammu, Rakesh Singh Raka Vice President Central Zone, Vijay Laxmi Datta Senior leader, Dilshad Malik, Rita Gupta Vice Presidents Central Zone, Ashwani Abrol, Arun Deep Singh Senior Vice President Trade and Industry Cell, Rajesh Chaddha Vice President Trade and Industry Cell, Gurdip Singh Wazir Secretary Trade and Industry Cell, Karan Mahajan Joint Secretary Trade and Industry Cell, Ashish Sharma Treasurer Trade and Industry Cell and others.

JU holds civil society interaction at Bhaderwah Campus ahead of Academic Council Meeting

VC assures time-bound infra-development measures

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BHADERWAH: In a landmark initiative of holding the Academic Council (AC) meeting of the University of Jammu's outside the main campus-first time in the Bhaderwah campus, a special interactive session was held with members of the civil society to strengthen regional academic needs and infra development of this institution of learning.

Being held ahead of the AC meeting, the event was marked by enthusiastic participation from local stakeholders including senior citizens, educators, officers from civil administration, youth leaders, social workers, and public representatives.

Presiding over the session, Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu, welcomed the gathering and lauded the deep community participation.

Responding to the wide-ranging queries raised by the participants, Prof. Rai acknowledged the long-standing aspirations with regard to academics of the people of Bhaderwah and assured that the University is committed to strengthening



VC JU, Prof. Umesh Rai being honoured.

ing the offsite campus through expansion and infra-structural upgrades.

Referring to specific concerns-including the demand for science subjects, language courses (Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu), skill-based self-financing programmes, functionalization of the Seismic Centre, completion of hostel infrastructure, and the establishment of a cricket stadium of international standard-Prof. Rai assured that developmental works have already begun and that the next five to six months will be crucial for delivering results in all these areas on the ground. He highlighted the introduction of the 'Design Your Degree' (DYD) programme, empowering students to choose flexible,

interdisciplinary courses aligned with employment and entrepreneurship.

The Vice Chancellor emphasized that Bhaderwah is not being treated as peripheral, but as a vital centre for academic innovation and regional progress.

the Chairman of the District Development Council (DDC), Doda Dhanantar Singh Kotwal extended gratitude to the Vice Chancellor for his second visit to Bhaderwah within a fortnight and lauded the University for its growing commitment to inclusive education.

He recalled Bhaderwah's legacy as a historical academic and administrative hub and emphasized the need to revive its stature. He also assured full coopera-

tion from the District Council in supporting the University's vision for Bhaderwah Campus. Daleep Singh Parihar, MLA Bhaderwah, while addressing the gathering, commended the Vice Chancellor's proactive outreach and described it as a major shift from past practices. He expressed pride in Bhaderwah's cultural and intellectual heritage and pledged support for projects such as academic, literary and tourism initiatives, and employment-oriented courses. He emphasized that Bhaderwah must not be left behind in the development journey of Jammu and Kashmir and stated that "together, we will place Bhaderwah on the academic and industrial map of the region."

In his welcome address, Prof. Rahul Gupta, Rector, Bhaderwah Campus gave a detailed report of the various programmes being offered by the Bhaderwah Campus and other details related to the infrastructure and research facilities on the campus.

In a culturally rich tribute to Bhaderwah's legacy, the University organized a cul-

tural programme featuring traditional performances. A special highlight was the mesmerizing performance of the region's famed Kud Dance, which captivated the audience and celebrated the spirit of Bhaderwah's folk traditions.

Adding to the celebratory mood, the University felicitated distinguished local contributors from various fields including art, literature, sports, social service, and entrepreneurship as a gesture of appreciation for their service and dedication to the community.

A formal vote of thanks was delivered by Dr. Neeraj Sharma, Registrar, University of Jammu. Among others present included Sangita Bhagat, Vice Chairperson DDC Doda, Yodhvir Thakur, DDC member, Prof. Anju Bhasin, Dean Academic Affairs, Prof. Neelu Rohmetra, Dean Research Studies, Prof. Sangita Gupta, Dean Planning and Development, Deans, Directors, Rectors, Heads of various departments; officers; and other officials of the University.