

Him-Drone-A-Thon

The Him-Drone-A-Thon 2 recently concluded, showcasing innovative drone solutions aimed at addressing various challenges in the region. Organized to promote technology and entrepreneurship, this event attracted participants from diverse backgrounds, including students, tech enthusiasts, and industry experts. Over the course of the event, teams competed to develop cutting-edge drone applications in sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, and disaster management. With a focus on sustainability and local needs, participants presented prototypes that demonstrated the potential of drones to enhance efficiency and improve lives. The event fostered collaboration and networking, allowing participants to connect with potential investors and industry leaders. The Him-Drone-A-Thon 2 not only highlighted the significance of drone technology in modern society but also aimed to inspire the next generation of innovators to harness technology for positive change in their communities.

Dengue Crisis in Jammu: Spike in cases leaves health system struggling

Dengue cases across India have surged in 2024, with over 150,000 cases reported nationwide by September. States like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Delhi and J&K have witnessed alarming spikes, putting immense pressure on healthcare systems.

The dengue outbreak in Jammu has taken a worrying turn, with a sharp rise in cases reported over the months of August and September. The situation, if not contained, could further escalate, putting immense pressure on the healthcare system of the region.

The rise in dengue cases in Jammu started early in August and continued to surge through September. This year, the region saw a particularly high incidence of mosquito breeding due to prolonged monsoon rains, which created favorable conditions for the Aedes mosquitoes, the primary carriers of the dengue virus.

According to the data provided by the Health Department of J&K, Dengue cases in Jammu and surrounding districts are on the rise, with 62 new cases reported on September 16, 2024, bringing the total count for the year to 692. Jammu district saw the highest spike with 45 cases, followed by Udhampur with 10. The majority of cases are among adults, while children accounted for 10 cases. Comparatively, the number of dengue cases has decreased from 1,156 cases by this time in 2023. Health authorities emphasize preventive measures, particularly in affected areas, urging residents to eliminate stagnant water and use protective clothing to prevent mosquito breeding and bites.

According to the data municipal area cases are 387 and Non-Municipal area cases is 48.

The main areas affected include densely populated urban centers such as Gandhi Nagar, Trikuta Nagar, and Janipur. Rural areas have also seen a significant rise in dengue cases, with villages near the Tawi River being particularly vulnerable due to stagnant water, a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

Hospitals across Jammu have been overwhelmed with the number of dengue patients. Both government and private hospitals are struggling to accommodate the influx of patients, with many healthcare facilities running out of space. Special dengue wards have been set up at the Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu and other leading hospitals to cater to the rising number of cases. Dr. DJ Raina State Malariologist J&K Directorate Health Services Jammu said, "The situation is critical. We are witnessing a daily increase in dengue cases, and our hospital is working at full capacity. We have set up special teams to monitor and manage the dengue cases, but the numbers are still rising."

State Malariologist J&K Directorate health service Jammu also issued Advisory for dengue.

The increase in cases has also led to a shortage of platelets, which are often required for treating severe cases of dengue. Many patients with low platelet counts are being referred to other medical facilities due to a shortage of blood products in Jammu's blood banks. The Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) and the Directorate of Health Services Jammu have initiated several measures to control the spread of dengue. These include intensified fogging operations in mosquito-prone areas, distribution of mosquito repellents, and public awareness campaigns on the importance of maintaining cleanliness. However, despite these efforts, the situation remains dire. Many residents have expressed concern over the inadequate measures taken by local authorities, particularly in areas where waterlogging and poor sanitation are prevalent.

Peoples, said, "The authorities are not doing enough. We have been complaining about waterlogging in our area for weeks, and there has been no action. The mosquitoes are everywhere, and now so many people are getting sick."

The Jammu and Kashmir government has also sought assistance from the central government to tackle the dengue crisis. A team of experts from the National Vector Borne Disease Control Program (NVBDCP) is expected to visit the region to assess the situation and suggest further measures to prevent the spread of the disease.

Dengue fever is a mosquito-borne viral infection that can cause severe flu-like symptoms, including high fever, severe headache, pain behind the eyes, joint and muscle pain, and rash. In severe cases, dengue can lead to dengue hemorrhagic fever, which can be fatal if not treated promptly.

The Health Department has urged residents to take precautions to protect themselves from mosquito bites. These include using mosquito nets, wearing long-sleeved clothing, applying mosquito repellents, and ensuring that there is no stagnant water around homes, which can become breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Residents are also advised to seek medical attention if they experience symptoms of dengue. Early diagnosis and treatment can prevent complications and reduce the risk of severe dengue.

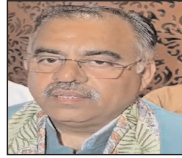
Public awareness is key to controlling the dengue outbreak. The JMC, in collaboration with various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and local communities, has started a door-to-door campaign to educate people about the importance of maintaining hygiene and keeping their surroundings free from mosquito breeding sites. The Health Department has also launched an awareness campaign through radio and television channels, urging people to be cautious and take preventive measures. Schools and colleges are being involved in these campaigns, with students being encouraged to spread the message about dengue prevention.

In addition to these efforts, several voluntary blood donation drives are being organized to ensure an adequate supply of platelets for dengue patients.

However, experts believe that a more comprehensive and long-term strategy is needed to effectively tackle the dengue outbreak in Jammu. This includes improving sanitation infrastructure, regular fumigation, and better waste management practices in both urban and rural areas. As the monsoon season comes to an end, it is expected that the number of dengue cases will gradually decline. However, with October still being warm and humid, health officials are concerned that the mosquito population may persist, prolonging the dengue crisis. Authorities are urging the public to remain vigilant and continue taking preventive measures even after the monsoon ends. The Health Department has assured the public that all necessary steps are being taken to control the spread of dengue, but community cooperation is essential in this fight against the disease.

The coming weeks will be crucial in determining whether Jammu can bring the dengue outbreak under control or whether more aggressive measures will be needed to curb its spread.

The dengue outbreak in Jammu during August and September 2024 has been alarming, with a record number of cases putting a strain on the healthcare system. While efforts are being made to control the spread, the situation remains critical, and a concerted effort by both the authorities and the public is needed to tackle this public health crisis effectively.



TARUN CHUGH.

As we mark the first 100 days of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) 3.0 government under the exceptional leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it is with immense pride and gratitude that we reflect on a period of remarkable achievements. These first three months have witnessed unprecedented advancements across multiple sectors, laying the groundwork for India's sustained progress and growth. With an unwavering focus on comprehensive development, the NDA government has prioritized key areas such as infrastructure, economic reforms, agriculture, defence, and social welfare. These efforts are not only driving immediate benefits but also setting India on a long-term path toward realizing the ambitious vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Laying strong foundation for future

Prime Minister Modi has laid the foundation for a forward-looking India, a nation aimed for growth and development. His leadership, characterized by dynamism and strategic foresight, continues to inspire and drive the country toward greater prosperity. As a nation, we owe a deep sense of gratitude to him for his visionary governance, which is steering India to new heights on the global stage. The far-reaching achievements across multiple sectors emphasize the transformative changes under NDA 3.0. The government's people-centric policies have significantly enhanced the ease of living for diverse groups, including the poor; middle class, Dalits, marginalized communities, youth, and women. These initiatives reflect a leadership committed to inclusive growth and social equity.

Milestone of national progress

The first 100 days of the Modi government are not just a symbolic milestone; they stand as a powerful testament to its unwavering dedication to national progress. Through bold and visionary initiatives, the government has laid a robust foundation for long-term growth, with a ripple effect that will positively impact both current and future generations. In this brief yet pivotal period, investments worth Rs 15 lakh crore have been made, underscoring the government's commitment to transformative development.

Agriculture at heart of development

The Modi government's deep focus on agriculture is a hallmark of its commitment to building

100 days of transformative leadership: A testament to visionary governance under PM Modi

a self-reliant India. Placing farmers at the center of its economic vision, the government has ensured that their welfare remains a top priority. The recent hike in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Kharif crops underscores the administration's resolve to safeguard farmers' incomes and provide fair prices. Complementing this, the removal of the Minimum Export Price (MEP) on key commodities such as onions and basmati rice is a testament to the government's dedication to boosting agricultural exports. Moreover, the disbursement of Rs 20,000 crore under the 17th instalment of the Prime Minister Kisan Samman Nidhi, which has benefited 9.3 crore farmers, is yet another reflection of Prime Minister Modi's enduring commitment to strengthening rural livelihoods.

Infra development: Powering economic growth

The government's massive investment of Rs 3 lakh crore in infrastructure projects is reshaping India's connectivity landscape, paving the way for economic growth. The focus on linking unconnected villages to road networks, constructing new ports, and expanding railways is not only enhancing connectivity but also fuelling economic activity across the country. A forward-looking approach is evident in the PM Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement (PM E-DRIVE) Scheme, which, with an outlay of Rs 10,900 crore, seeks to accelerate India's transition to electric mobility, driving sustainability and innovation in the transportation sector.

Strengthening national security, defence

India's defence capabilities have seen significant advancements under the Modi government. The government is enhancing the nation's security and infrastructure. The revision of the One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme reinforces the government's support for defence personnel and their welfare, while its uncompromising stance on national security continues to foster peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

Empowering communities, advancing social welfare: The government's social welfare schemes have touched millions, empowering marginalized communities through landmark initiatives. Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, over three crore houses have been sanctioned, with a budgetary allocation of 5.36 lakh crore, benefiting the economically disadvantaged groups.

In a bid to further empower the middle class—a vital driver of economic growth—the government has introduced tax reforms, including a tax-free

income threshold up to Rs 7 lakh and an increased standard deduction. These measures, alongside the OROP revision, are designed to ensure the financial well-being of both civilians and defence personnel alike.

Women empowerment, catalyst for sustainable development

The Modi government recognizes that empowering women is essential for sustainable growth. Through various initiatives, 10 crore women have been brought into self-help groups, providing them with vital access to financial resources and skill development opportunities. The realization of 11 lakh new Lakhpati Didis further reflects the Prime Minister's commitment to women's empowerment. Additionally, the expansion of MUDRA loan limit will enable women entrepreneurs to achieve economic independence and contribute to the nation's progress.

Harnessing power of youth: Yuva Shakti

India's youth are the backbone of its future, and the government is investing heavily in their development. A Rs 2 lakh crore package has been introduced for skill enhancement and job creation, with incentives for first-time employees. This initiative is bridging the skill gap, promoting entrepreneurship, and ensuring that the next generation is well-equipped to lead India's economic resurgence. Healthcare and Education: Fundamental Rights, Fundamental Progress The government has prioritized healthcare and education as fundamental rights, ensuring that all citizens benefit from essential services. The expansion of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) to provide Rs 5 lakh in health insurance coverage for senior citizens above 70 years has improved healthcare access for 4.5 crore families and 6 crore senior citizens. Moreover, the introduction of 75,000 new medical seats will enhance healthcare infrastructure, reducing reliance on foreign institutions.

Justice reforms for new era: With a citizen-first approach, the government has introduced three new criminal laws aimed at justice rather than mere punishment. These legal reforms, through the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyama 2023, replace outdated colonial-era laws, striving to make justice more accessible, effective, and citizen-centric. The National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme (NFIES), with a budget of Rs 2,250 crore, fur-

ther strengthens the justice system by ensuring timely and scientific evidence examination.

New dawn in space and technology

India's foray into space and technology has reached new heights, with the establishment of a Rs 1,000 crore venture capital fund for space start-ups. This initiative positions India as a global leader in space exploration, unlocking new possibilities for innovation and collaboration on the global stage.

A Visionary Leader, A Prosperous Future As we commemorate these 100 days of transformative leadership, it is evident that Prime Minister Modi's vision has elevated India both domestically and internationally. From comprehensive agricultural reforms and vast infrastructure development to strengthening national security and improving the quality of life for all Indians, the approach of 'Sab Ka Saath, Sab Ka Vikas, Sab Ka Vishwas' has been pivotal. The NDA government has left no stone unturned in its quest to transform the nation's future.

Our Prime Minister's diplomatic efforts in the ongoing international conflicts have been commendable, showcasing his commitment to global peace and stability. His deep concern over these conflicts and emphasis on India's readiness to extend all possible cooperation to restore peace through dialogue and diplomacy highlight his dedication to finding peaceful resolutions. Modi's approach underscores India's role as a responsible global player, advocating for the end of hostilities and the importance of diplomatic engagement.

His efforts have been widely recognized, with leaders acknowledging India's potential to play a constructive role in mediating peace. Undoubtedly, Modi stands as a global leader, making India the 'Vishwa Guru' with the philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

Looking ahead, India is poised for greatness, driven by a relentless pursuit of technological advancement, industry-friendly policies, and a commitment to equitable growth.

The country stands on the threshold of a prosperous future, ready to take its rightful place on the global stage. The bold and strategic decisions made in these first 100 days are just the beginning of a transformative journey. Under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Modi, an even brighter future awaits India, where prosperity and progress will continue to thrive.

(The writer is National General Secretary of the BJP)

Agripreneurship Development through Value Addition of Minor Fruits in Kandi Areas of Jammu; A Pathway to Self-Reliant Rural Women & Youth

PROF. POONAM PARIHAR

Agripreneurship refers to entrepreneurship in agriculture. Entrepreneurship is a concept that encompasses transforming an idea or vision into a "new business or new venture creation, or the expansion of an existing business by an individual, a team of individuals or an established business" (Reynolds et al.). A shift from agriculture to agribusiness is an essential pathway to revitalize Indian agriculture & to make more attractive & profitable venture. Agripreneurship has the potential to contribute to a range of social & economic development such as employment generation, income generation, poverty reduction & improvements in nutrition, health & overall food security in the National economy. Agripreneurship has potential to generate growth, diversifying income, providing widespread employment & entrepreneurial opportunities in rural areas. Nutritional security for the burgeoning Indian population cannot be met by focussing on the staple and major horticultural crops alone. There is a vast production of underutilized and underexploited minor horticultural crops which could be used as the "future crops" to supplement our nutritional needs. In the last decade there has been increasing recognition by the scientific community, policy makers and users at large, of the role played by minor crops for the well-being of people worldwide. Such a role is only now being acknowledged (in spite of the fact that these crops have been used by people ever since agriculture began) due to various factors. These factors include: a better understanding of the value of biodiversity as a whole; increasing attention being paid to conserving agro biodiversity through the enhancement of its use; increasing attention being paid to sustainability in agricultural production; the call for "innovative food" to diversify agricultural production; greater attention paid to the quality of our food; the possibility of using minor crops for cultivating marginal lands; and the availability of new technological tools (such as biotechnology) for crop improvement and food processing (Padulosi 1999). India has experienced a considerable degree of crop diversification in term of changes in the area under various crops since the Green Revolution, which was largely oriented towards increasing food grains production to meet the objective of self-sufficiency and resolve the country's food security problem. In the past one decade, the change in cropping pattern is more towards the horticulture sector and commercial crops (Mittal, 2007).

Horticultural crops form a significant part of total agricultural produce in the country comprising of fruits, vegetables, root and tuber crops, flowers, ornamental plants, medicinal and aromatic plants, spices, condiments, plantation crops and mushrooms have become key drivers of economic development in many of the states in the country. Horticulture contributes 30.4% of the Agriculture Gross Domestic Product (GDP) & about 33% to the Agriculture Gross Value added (GVA). The horticulture production in the country in 2023-2024 is estimated to be 352.23 Million Tonnes. At present, India is the second largest producer of fruits & vegetables in the world. (According to second advance estimate of horticulture production released by the Ministry of



Agriculture). This calls for technology-led development. Horticultural crops play a unique role in India's economy by improving the income of the rural people. Cultivation of these crops is labour intensive and as such they generate lot of employment opportunities in the rural population. Fruit plant genetic resources are the wealth of a country since they are sources of food, feed, cloth, house building materials, vitamins, minerals and medicine. It possesses a good number of minor fruits often growing in the homesteads, roadsides, hills and forests. They are hardy in nature, adapted to the local climate and productive even under adverse soil and climatic conditions and resistant to disease and pests. Producing minor fruits is a source of livelihood for many farmers and serves as safety net during the time of hardship and natural disaster. Those are considered as an important dietary source of fibre, bioactive compounds and phyto-chemicals and compared to other fruits, it possesses high antioxidant activity and are naturally rich in a variety of phyto-chemicals, particularly phenolic compounds. Apart from nutritive value, these are particularly more important for medicinal properties especially in Ayurvedic medicine. Many of these fruits have processing qualities like preparation of jam, jelly, candy, chutney, sauce, pickles, juice, syrup, squash, beverage, canned and cut fruits which help in building entrepreneurship.

These fruits also contribute to poverty reduction and livelihood enhancement as well as ensure household food and nutritional security adding women participation through employment and income generation. In India, the land holding pattern in hill tracts reveals that nearly 90% of the farmers are small and marginal; hence, the minor fruits are ideal for cultivation as they need low input requirement, less production cost comprising higher nutritive value and high yield. Apart from nutritive value most people are familiar with the medicinal properties of locally grown minor fruits. It lays emphasis on exploiting the versatile usefulness of these tremendous resources, in combating the challenges of nutritional security as well as exploiting medicinal attributes adding income generation for the better livelihood of the hills' tribal and rural people. Rahman, 2003 revealed that the producers, sellers and workers involved in minor fruit production, packaging and selling may improve their livelihoods from this sector. Most of the rural houses possess a home garden which is a source of livelihood for many families and serves as safety net during the time of hardship and natural disaster. The loss of such species has serious implications on rural life and not only deprives people from essential vitamins and vital insurance against malnutrition but also medicinal attributes and employment opportunity. So, time has come

when agriculture has to be run as agribusiness rather than subsistence agriculture. In view of the small and scattered farm holdings and a majority of farmers being resource poor, strengthening of local infrastructure is important. Minor horticulture crops have immense medicinal and nutritional values but the farmers of this area are ignorant about the benefits of these plants. Capacity building on scientific value addition of minor fruits for sustainable livelihood security, introduction of improved cultivars of minor fruits, establishing demonstration/training unit for exploitation of underutilized minor fruits by value addition for income generation & human resource development & developing linkages & Formulation of farmers Interest Groups for market-led-extension are the important science and technology interventions of the project.

The participants will be made aware about the scientific information regarding value addition, packaging, grading, branding & marketing. The entrepreneurial competencies of the farmers will be enhanced by providing them the scientific trainings on value addition of minor fruits & they will take interest in setting up their own ventures. The farmers can become the agripreneurs, start their own agri-enterprises. They will get good profits for their products. In this way their living standard will be improved & socio-economic status will be enhanced & migration from rural to urban areas will be stopped. The project is likely to bring larger impact on the non-target population also by way of diffusion of innovation and awareness about the value addition of minor fruits. Besides more Farmer/ Farm women groups can be created which can take lead in establishing their own agri-enterprises for additional income in the villages.

Since the rural Kandi Area in Jammu is dominated by traditional and minor fruits like Desi mango, Gal gal, Chakotra, Jhamiri, Khatta, Kimb, Ber, Aonla, Jamun, Karonda, Phalsa & Bael etc. The target group (Women and youth) could be exposed to different training interventions for increasing their knowledge & Skill up gradation. The demonstrations/training on post-harvest operations like grading, Packaging Branding & Marketing would encourage self-employment to rural people and value addition of locally available minor fruits. It will improve the productive efficiency of the natural resources and provide better and more livelihood options to farmers and agriculture workers. Exposure visit of farmers to practical aspect of new technology will enable farmers to mold the scientific technology into their own technology. The main consumption markets of the districts are far away from production centers. Lack of modern and efficient infrastructure like fast means of connectivity aggravates the problem of transporting the

fruit especially of perishable nature to the main markets of the district. It is expected that there will be Capacity building on scientific value addition of minor fruits for sustainable livelihood security, income generation & human resource development & developing linkages & stopping of migration from rural areas to urban. Formulation of farmers Interest Groups for market-led-extension can uplift the socioeconomic conditions of the target group.

Traditional and minor fruits contribute to poverty reduction and livelihood enhancement as well as ensure household food and nutritional security adding women and youth participation through employment and income generation. The producers, sellers and workers involved in minor fruit production, packaging and selling may improve their livelihoods from this sector. Most of the rural houses possess a home garden which is a source of livelihood for many families and serves as safety net during the time of hardship and natural disaster.

The loss of such species has serious implications on rural life and not only deprives people from essential vitamins and vital insurance against malnutrition but also medicinal attributes and employment opportunity (Rahman, 2003). More than 60 per cent women in India, are engaged in agriculture and allied activities. The land holding pattern in hill tracts reveals that nearly 90% of the farmers are small and marginal; hence, the minor fruits are ideal for cultivation causes low drudgery as they need low input requirement, less production cost comprising higher nutritive value and high yield. Apart from nutritive value most people are familiar with the medicinal properties of locally grown minor fruits.

It lays emphasis on exploiting the versatile usefulness of these tremendous resources, in combating the challenges of nutritional security as well as exploiting medicinal attributes adding income generation for the better livelihood of women and youth/farmer groups in the rural areas.

The value addition allows the farmers to focus on the consumer while producing & through meeting expectations, he/she can create a loyal market around product. Value addition to food has assumed vital importance in our country due to diversity in socio-economic conditions, industrial growth, urbanization & globalization. The target group (Women and youth) would be exposed to different training interventions for increasing their knowledge. The awareness & demonstrations would be given to the target groups on processing, preservation, value addition, grading, branding & marketing of the traditional and minor fruits to enhance their socio-economic status which can improve their living standard by establishing the agri-ventures/stat ups. The formulated FIGs would also act as role model for other women & youth of the local areas & the other people get boosted, motivated & convinced to start up their agri-ventures & moreover this would be a positive & right kind of approach to make the rural masses self-reliant which can reduce poverty, create employment, improve the living standard & enhance the socio-economic status of the rural women & youth of Kandi areas of Jammu.

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