

Chouhan, Omar review Agri, Rural Development progress in J&K

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 03

In a significant move to strengthen Jammu & Kashmir's agriculture and rural development landscape, Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today co-chaired a high-level review meeting at the Civil Secretariat, Srinagar.

The meeting was also attended by Union Minister of State for A&FW Ram Nath Thakur, Minister for Agriculture Production, RDD & PR Javid Ahmed Dar, and Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani.

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Secretary DA&FW, GoI Devesh Chaturvedi, Secretary DARE, GoI Mangi Lal Jat, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Joint Secretary Ministry of Rural Development, Additional Secretary DA&FW, along with senior officers from the Government of India and Jammu & Kashmir administration including Administrative Secretaries of Agriculture Production, PWD, RDD, and heads of departments of agriculture, allied sectors and rural development were present in the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reaffirmed the Government of India's commitment under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the holistic development of Jammu & Kashmir.

"For Viksit Bharat, a Viksit Jammu & Kashmir is essential. I extend my full support to CM Omar Abdullah and his team and assure



you that my office is just a call away whenever needed," the Union Minister said.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan lauded the J&K Government led by CM Omar Abdullah for its achievements in agriculture and allied sectors and appreciated the momentum being built at the grassroots.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, in his welcome address, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Union Minister for his prompt response and visit: "Your presence here today has truly won our hearts. We have always known you to be a positive and responsive leader, but I must admit—I did not expect such a swift and gracious response. A few days ago, during the NITI Aayog meeting, I had requested you to visit, especially after the Pahalgam incident, to reassure the people that the nation stands with us. Today, you are here with your full team, which reflects your deep commitment and solidarity."

He added that face-to-face engagement, as opposed to formal correspondence, helps in quicker resolution of issues. "This

meeting itself is a testimony to how much can be achieved through dialogue and collaboration," he said.

Earlier in the meeting, Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, Shailendra Kumar, and Secretary, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Aijaz Asad, gave comprehensive presentations on the performance and progress of their respective departments.

They highlighted implementation status, physical and financial achievements under various centrally sponsored schemes, GoI-supported and UT-specific schemes, including: PM-Kisan, RKVY, Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture; Rural infrastructure initiatives under MGNREGA, PMAY-G, NRLM, and PMAY

Key performance indicators, success stories from field-level beneficiaries, and use of digital governance tools for real-time monitoring were also showcased.

The meeting broadly reviewed sectoral achievements, discussed bottlenecks, and chalked out action plans to accelerate progress in both Agriculture

and Rural Development sectors.

On the occasion, in the presence of the Chief Minister and Union Agriculture Minister, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Kudumbashree and JKRLM to establish 20 food service enterprises across all 20 districts of J&K. This initiative aims to empower women, Self-Help Groups (SHG) by creating local employment opportunities and building market-ready ventures.

Additionally, the dignitaries launched 'Har Didi Ek Kahani'—a compendium of success stories of over 100 women SHGs who have become Lakhpati Didis through structured enterprise support, capacity building, and mentorship under the JKRLM framework.

The Union Minister and the Chief Minister jointly made commitment for grassroots empowerment, inclusive growth, and stronger centre-state collaboration to transform the rural and agricultural ecosystem of Jammu and Kashmir.

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Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs (FCS&CA), Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, today emphasized the transformative potential of direct selling industry in empowering youth, fostering ethical entrepreneurship and catalyzing inclusive economic growth in Jammu & Kashmir.

He was speaking at a conclave organised by Federation of Indian Direct Selling Industries on Direct Selling and Consumer Markets on the theme "Regulations, Innovations and Growth."

The Minister appreciated the Dignitaries, Industry Leaders and the Delegates for their collective commitment towards fostering a robust and ethical direct selling ecosystem in the region and across the nation.

"The landscape of consumer markets is constantly evolving and at the heart of this evolution lies the direct selling industry, a sector that has shown remarkable resilience, adaptability and the power to reach grassroot communities across India," maintained the Minister.

He underscored the ne-



cessity of a clear and comprehensive regulatory framework, calling it not just beneficial but essential. "Trust forms the very foundation of direct selling between the seller and the consumer and within the business model itself. Well-defined regulations provide this trust, protect consumers from malpractices and create a level playing field for all the stakeholders," he said.

Reiterating Jammu & Kashmir Government's commitment, Sharma assured full support for ethical practices, consumer protection and responsible business conduct. "We are resolute in ensuring effective implementation of reg-

ulations that eliminate ambiguities and build consumer confidence, thereby unlocking the full potential of direct selling," the Minister stated.

Highlighting the sector's role in youth engagement, the Minister said that the direct selling is a powerful vehicle for generating employment, promoting skill development and enabling meaningful self-employment, especially among women and youth. It offers a low-barrier entry point for entrepreneurship, contributing significantly to local economies, he added.

The Minister further affirmed that the government is creating an enabling environment for

direct selling companies to invest and expand in Jammu & Kashmir. "We view this sector as a vital component of our economic resurgence," he said, adding that ethical growth of the industry must be inextricably linked to innovation and unwavering adherence to consumer rights.

"Together, we can ensure that direct selling continues to be a powerful force for economic empowerment and a model of responsible business in India. Let us strengthen the trust and confidence of our consumers and drive sustainable development through this dynamic sector", maintained the Minister.

DC reviews Good Governance Index performance in Udhampur

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Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai, today chaired a meeting with officers from various line departments to review the status of the Good Governance Index in the district.

At the outset, DSEO, Darshan Kumar, presented an overview of the District Good Governance Index through a detailed PowerPoint presentation. He outlined the objectives of the index and its role in monitoring district-level performance across key developmental sectors.

The meeting was attended by PO Poshan Subash Dogra, General Manager DIC Kishore Singh Katoch, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Dr. Umesh Shan, Chief Planning Officer Mohd Iqbal Zargar and other senior officers of line departments.

During the meeting, Chief



Education Officer was instructed to take proactive measures to improve gender parity in the education sector. The Executive Engineer, JPDCL was directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply to all government schools. In this regard, the DC emphasized checking the availability and functionality of both power and drinking water facilities

in schools. The Social Welfare Department was asked to boost beneficiary enrollment under the Atal Poshan Yojana, while the PO Poshan was directed to monitor abandoned buildings for their potential use in accommodating Anganwadi Centres.

Additionally, the Health Department was instructed to take steps to increase the

rate of institutional deliveries in the district, as part of efforts to strengthen maternal and child health services. The Deputy Commissioner urged all departments to work in close coordination and adopt a result-oriented approach to ensure significant improvement in governance standards at the grassroots level.

Devotional event held at Chichi Mata for Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra

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In a spiritually uplifting initiative to mark the commencement of the Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra 2025, the District Administration Samba organized a devotional and cultural evening at the revered Chichi Mata Temple.

The proceedings were formally inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Samba, Rajesh Sharma, who paid obeisance at the shrine and invoked divine blessings for the safe, smooth, and successful conduct of the Yatra. His presence underscored the administration's unwavering commitment to facilitating this sacred pilgrimage.

The atmosphere was imbued with devotional fervor as local artists rendered soul-stirring bhajans, en-



thralling the audience and elevating the spiritual ambience. The resonant hymns echoed through the temple premises, creating an aura of serenity and reverence.

The event was graced by the presence of Additional District Development Com-

missioner Champa Devi, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, officers from the civil administration, Shri Amarnath Ji pilgrims and an enthusiastic gathering of local devotees.

This initiative served not only as a gesture of warm

hospitality to the Yatrīs but also as a celebration of the region's vibrant spiritual and cultural ethos. The District Administration reaffirmed its resolve to provide a seamless, secure and spiritually enriching experience to all pilgrims embarking on this revered journey.

DDC Rajouri reviews progress on Kissan Khidmat Ghars under HADP

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District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma today chaired a meeting to review the progress of the establishment of Kissan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) in the district.

During the meeting, the DDC laid special emphasis on expediting the selection

of Krishi Udyamis for the KKGs, stating that operationalizing these centers on a war footing is crucial. "Making the KKGs functional at the earliest will not only provide much-needed support to the farming community but will also create meaningful employment opportunities for highly educated and unemployed youth of the district," he said.

In a significant step towards promoting sustainable agricultural practices,

the DDC also directed the officers to initiate Natural Farming as a pilot project in Badhal village of Sub Division Koteranka.

The initiative aims to reduce the adverse phytotoxic effects caused by excessive use of chemical inputs in farming.

To ensure the operational readiness of the KKGs, the DDC further instructed the concerned departments to expedite the procurement of essential furniture and IT equip-

ment for the centers scheduled to be established during the current financial year.

The meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer Rajouri, Chief Agriculture Officer Rajouri, and Accounts Officer from the Office of the Deputy Commissioner Rajouri. The DDC directed all attending officers to work in close coordination and ensure timely implementation of all deliverables under HADP.

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The revered Annual Yatra of Shri Ashtadash Bhujā Mata Sarthal Devi Ji commenced today in Kishtwar, marking the beginning of a joyous and spiritually significant event.

The yatra began with a grand Hawan ceremony held at Gori Shankar Mandir, Sarkoot, where devotees fervently offered Aahuti and Puran Aahuti (sacred oblations).

Accompanied by an impressive Shoba Yatra, the Chari Mubarak (holy procession) proceeded through Chowgan Ground, Shaheedi Chowk, and the Bus Stand, starting from Gori Shankar Mandir.

Thousands of devotees, including men, women, and children, enthusiastically chanted religious slogans and bhajans, while traditional "Paddari Dance" to drum beats resonated along



the procession route.

Local communities from various neighborhoods extended a warm welcome to the Holy Chari.

At the Bus Stand, devotees boarded buses and other vehicles to make their way to the historic Shri Sarthal Devi Temple in Kishtwar.

A grand Jagran (night-long devotional singing) is going to be organized today at the Sarthal Devi Mata Bhawan, adding to the spir-

itual fervor of the yatra.

Tomorrow morning, on 04 July, a Maha Yajna (grand religious ritual) will be performed at Sarthal Devi Mandir.

The district administration and police have made meticulous arrangements for security, drinking water, power supply, transportation, and other essential facilities at Kishtwar and Sarthal to ensure a smooth and comfortable experience for the devotees.

Sarthal Devi Ji is revered as the "Kul Devi" (patron goddess) of the region.

The historic yatra has been organized every year since the Dogra regime, and each devotee holds a deep and unique faith in this sacred pilgrimage.

The yatra is annually organized by the Shri Sarthal Devi Ji Trust, under the patronage of Dr. Karan Singh, the sole trustee and Vikramaditya Singh, Chairman Trustee of the Trust.

Pooja Thakur, Chairperson of the District Development Council (DDC) Kishtwar; MLA Kishtwar, Shagun Parihar; Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Pankaj Kumar Sharma; prominent socio-religious personalities of Kishtwar; key officers from the civil and police administration; Arvind Parihar, President of Santan Dharma Sabha and Sanjeev Parihar, Vice Chairman of Shri Sarthal Devi Ji Trust, among others were present on the occasion.