

Collective Farming gains momentum in Budgam; Over 200 Farmers attend SKUAST-K outreach Programme

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, JULY 29

More than 200 farmers participated in a major Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) mobilisation drive in Budgam as SKUAST-K intensified efforts to strengthen farmer collectives under the IFAD-supported Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP).

The programme, organised by The Ashtar Valley Farmer Producer Organisation Cooperative Ltd., Arigam Khansahib, focused on expanding farmer membership and promoting collective farming enterprises as a pathway to higher incomes, improved market access and sustainable agricultural growth.

The event brought together officials associated with the JKCIP collectivisation programme, FPO development officers from several districts, scientists, extension experts and members of the Ashtar Valley FPO.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. (Dr.) Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Extension and Dean, Faculty of Horticulture, SKUAST-Kashmir, said that FPOs



are emerging as powerful institutions for transforming agriculture by enabling farmers to access quality inputs, modern technologies, institutional credit, value addition facilities and organised markets through collective action. She urged farmers to actively join producer organisations and leverage opportunities being created under the IFAD-backed JKCIP, adding that SKUAST-K remains committed to providing technical support, capacity building and extension services to strengthen farmer-led institutions across Jammu and Kashmir.

Speaking on the occasion,

Prof. Bilal Ahmad Lone, Head, KVK Budgam, highlighted the importance of scientific farming, collective marketing and skill enhancement in improving farm profitability and rural livelihoods.

Dr. Mohammad Iqbal Bhat, Coordinator, Upscaling Collectivization Component, JKCIP, SKUAST-K, outlined the project's strategy for building strong and self-reliant farmer organisations. He said enhanced farmer participation and membership are critical for creating sustainable producer collectives capable of addressing production, aggregation and marketing challenges.

An interactive session held during the programme saw farmers seeking information on FPO membership, governance mechanisms, business planning and market opportunities.

Experts responded to the queries and encouraged eligible farmers to join the growing collective of farmers.

The mobilisation drive forms part of ongoing efforts under JKCIP to expand and strengthen farmer-owned institutions, with a focus on improving competitiveness, market integration and income generation in the agriculture sector.

DC Pulwama chairs meeting of District Advisory Committee on My Bharat Initiative

PULWAMA, JULY 29: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, today chaired a meeting of the District Advisory Committee on My Bharat at the Administrative Complex, Pulwama, to review the implementation and progress of the MY Bharat initiative in the district.

At the outset, the District Youth Officer, Pulwama, delivered a detailed presentation highlighting the objectives of MY Bharat and the progress achieved in the district. The presentation covered youth registrations, formation of Youth Clubs, registration of NGOs, experiential learning opportunities, district performance on the MY Bharat portal, events conducted, and the roadmap for strengthening youth participation in the coming months.

Addressing the meeting, the DC highlighted the importance of creating meaningful opportunities for youth engagement through skill development, community service, and nation-building activities under the MY Bharat platform.



During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the district's performance under various indicators and took stock of the status of youth registrations and institutional participation. He stressed the need for coordinated efforts

among all stakeholder departments to enhance outreach and ensure greater enrolment of youth on the MY Bharat platform.

Dr. Qayoom directed the concerned officers to intensify awareness campaigns in educational institutions and at the grassroots level through Youth Clubs, NSS, NCC, and other community-based organisations. He also emphasized the importance of organising reg-

ular youth-centric activities to encourage leadership and community participation under the My Bharat initiative.

Dr. Qayoom emphasized that educational institutions, Youth Clubs, Panchayati Raj Institutions, Urban Local Bodies, and field functionaries should be actively involved in mobilising youth and ensuring maximum registrations.

On the occasion, the DC directed all concerned departments and stakeholders to work in close coordination with the District Youth Office to maximise youth enrolment and ensure effective implementation of the objectives of the MY Bharat initiative.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama; General Manager, DIC, Pulwama; Assistant Commissioner Development, Pulwama; and other members of the District Advisory Committee.

DC Srinagar reviews progress, implementation of Mission YUVA scheme

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JAMMU, JULY 29

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting of Officers of line Departments and Bankers at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex to assess the progress and implementation of the Mission YUVA scheme in the District.

The meeting was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner, Rifat Aftab Qureshi, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadil Fareed, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, General Manager DIC, Abid Husain, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, Deputy Director Employment, Shubi Tabsum, Zonal Head Jammu and Kashmir Bank, senior Officers from concerned departments, representatives of various banks, SBDUs and other stakeholders associated with the implementation of the



scheme. During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the status of applications received, cases approved by the District Level Implementation Committee (DLIC), and the progress made in sanctioning and disbursing financial assistance to eligible beneficiaries under Mission YUVA.

The DC directed the concerned Bank Officials and SBDUs to expedite the processing of DLIC-approved cases and ensure timely fi-

nancial support to aspiring entrepreneurs. He emphasized the need for close coordination among all stakeholders to remove procedural delays and facilitate smooth implementation of the scheme on the ground.

Highlighting the importance of Mission YUVA in promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment opportunities, the DC stressed that all eligible beneficiaries should be provided necessary support within stipulated

timelines. He called for proactive engagement with applicants and regular monitoring and clearance of pending cases to achieve the set targets under the scheme.

The DC further directed the concerned Officers to intensify awareness and outreach activities to encourage more youth to avail the benefits of Mission YUVA and establish sustainable livelihood and self-employment ventures. He emphasized the need to ensure that maximum eligible young entrepreneurs across the district are covered under the scheme.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the progress of entrepreneurship mentoring initiatives, registration of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), coverage of college students under the Udyam Jagriti programme, and other key components of Mission YUVA. He urged all stakeholders to work in close coordination for the effective implementation of the scheme and timely achievement of its objectives across Srinagar district.

Delhi student crackdown marks beginning of BJP Govt's political decline: Maderna

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JAMMU, JULY 29

Launching a scathing attack on the BJP-led Central Government, senior Congress leaders on Wednesday accused it of systematically undermining democratic institutions, suppressing the voice of political opponents, and pushing the country's youth into uncertainty through unemployment, paper leaks and alleged institutional manipulation.

The allegations were made during a one-day meeting of the Jammu Urban District Congress Committee, which was addressed by AICC Secretary and Co-Incharge for Jammu and Kashmir Affairs Ms. Divya Mahipal Maderna, former MLA from Rajasthan.

The meeting was also addressed by Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) Working President and former Minister Raman Bhalla, former Minister Yogesh Sawhney, besides several senior party leaders. Those who also addressed the gathering included Ved Mahajan, Manmohan Singh, Satish Sharma, Amrit Bali, Sohni Sharma, Rajesh Sharma and Surinder Kumar.

Addressing party workers, Ms. Divya Mahipal Maderna alleged that the BJP government had weakened every constitutional institution that once safeguarded democracy and accountability.

She said the ruling dispensation had adopted a politics of intimidation by silencing opposition voices, targeting dissenters through investigative agencies and shrinking democratic space. "A government that fears questions can never strengthen democracy," she asserted, urging Congress workers to intensify their outreach among the people.

Maderna said the country's youth had become the



biggest victims of the BJP's "failed governance model". She alleged that repeated leakage of examination papers, including the NEET examination, had shattered the aspirations of lakhs of students who had spent years preparing for competitive examinations. Instead of creating employment opportunities and ensuring transparent recruitment, the government had pushed young people towards frustration and uncertainty, she said.

The AICC Secretary further alleged that while the BJP projected itself as the custodian of faith, serious allegations regarding irregularities in donations received for the construction of the Shri Ram Temple at Ayodhya had raised disturbing questions. She also accused the BJP of attempting to capture educational institutions and convert them into centres of ideological propaganda rather than institutions of learning.

Referring to the police action against peacefully protesting students in Delhi on July 20, Maderna said the brutal use of force had exposed the government's intolerance towards democratic dissent and marked the beginning of the BJP government's political decline.

"The countdown of the BJP government at the Centre has begun because the youth of the country have realised that their future has been sacrificed for

political propaganda," she remarked.

Speaking on the occasion, JKPC Working President Raman Bhalla accused the BJP government of bulldozing democratic institutions and eroding the independence of constitutional bodies for political gains. He alleged that Parliament was being reduced to a mere formality, federal principles were being weakened and opposition parties were deliberately denied opportunities to raise issues affecting the common people.

Bhalla said unprecedented inflation had made life miserable for every household in the country. Prices of essential commodities, LPG cylinders, fuel, medicines and other necessities had risen sharply, placing an unbearable financial burden on middle-class and poor families.

He said despite tall claims of economic progress, unemployment had reached alarming levels, leaving educated youth with little hope of securing dignified employment.

The senior Congress leader further alleged that the BJP government had failed to protect the interests of students and job seekers. Frequent recruitment irregularities, delayed examinations and repeated paper leak scandals had badly damaged the credibility of public institutions.

Referring to the July 20

police action against protesting students in Delhi, Bhalla said the incident had exposed the government's authoritarian mindset. "Instead of listening to the genuine concerns of students, the government chose to respond with force. This has further alienated the youth, and the political countdown of the BJP government has begun," he said, urging Congress workers to strengthen the party at the grassroots and prepare for future electoral battles.

Former Minister Yogesh Sawhney said the BJP had failed on every major promise made to the people and was now attempting to divert public attention from unemployment, inflation, corruption allegations and growing public dissatisfaction.

He said the youth of the country deserved transparent examinations, quality education, employment opportunities and democratic freedoms, but were instead facing uncertainty, fear and repression. He called upon Congress workers to remain united and take the party's message to every household.

The meeting concluded with party leaders calling upon workers to strengthen the Congress organisation at the grassroots level and intensify the struggle against what they described as the anti-people and anti-democratic policies of the BJP-led government at the Centre.

DC Kulgam chairs Block Diwas at DH Pora; focus on responsive, participatory governance

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Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today presided over the Block Diwas at DH Pora, where an extensive public outreach programme was conducted to hear and address the grievances and developmental concerns of local residents.

During the programme, people and representatives from different areas of the sub-division including DH Pora, Ahmadabad, Nandimarg, Laisoo, Yarikhah, Kounsarbal, Sadiwari, Aharbal, Khull, and several other villages projected various developmental demands before the DC relating to road connectivity & macadamisation, flood protection works, improvement in provision of drinking water, power tariff bills, staff for local health institutions and ambulatory services, irrigation canal upgradations, augmentation of power infrastructure, removal of encroachments and establishment of dumping sites and provision of door to door waste collection and disposal, Playground construction and upgradation, rural development works, PMAY issues, and other public importance issues.

The DC gave a patient hearing to every issue and assured the public about the commitment of the district administration towards their welfare. All issues and demands have been noted and shall be taken at appropriate fo-



rms for resolution, while as local level issues and demands shall be taken up promptly by the district administration, assured the DC while replying to the demands of the public.

The DC sought the cooperation of the residents in effective execution of rural development schemes while presenting the details of many ongoing works in the area. He said, department wise monitoring of public demands shall be undertaken with continuous follow up to ensure their timely fruition.

The DC exhorted against the open littering in water bodies and road sides and desisted public on polluting the natural resources and encroachments of canals and public lands. He

sought cooperation of all stakeholders towards the socio-economic and inclusive development of the district.

He further called upon the public to actively participate in the upcoming Gram Sabhas across all panchayats and verify the Priority Lists of PMAY-G beneficiaries to ensure transparency, fairness and authenticity. The DC also encouraged eligible households to avail the benefits of the PM Surya Ghar initiative.

Earlier, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kulgam, Vikar Ahmad Giri, addressed the gathering and elaborated on sanitation-related concerns and the measures being taken to strengthen

waste collection and disposal mechanisms. He also highlighted various labour welfare schemes, including educational assistance, marriage assistance, medical aid and insurance-based benefits, and urged eligible beneficiaries to apply for these Labour Department schemes.

The ADC informed the gathering that livestock healthcare services, including vaccination drives, and audit assessment of ongoing works under the Roads and Buildings (R&B) sector would also be taken up.

The programme was also attended by CPO, Exen R&B, DIO, district and sectoral officers, sub divisional and tehsil administration and a large number of residents from the area.