

LEAD unveils Third Annual Smarika, Showcasing Developmental Journey across Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS
JAMMU, AUG 06

LEAD – LJK Economic Growth and Development Dialogue today released the Third Edition of its Annual Smarika at a ceremony held at Amar Singh Club, Jammu.

The publication reflects LEAD's continued commitment to promoting inclusive economic growth, entrepreneurship, innovation, policy dialogue and sustainable development across the Union Territories of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

The Smarika was formally released by the Chief Guest, Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu and the Guest of Honour, Arun Kumar Manhas, Director, Industries & Commerce, Jammu in the presence of LEAD Board Members, Executive Members and prominent business identities.

The third edition highlights LEAD's initiatives and achievements over the past year, including programmes focused on entrepreneurship development, startup promotion, rural livelihoods, agriculture, tourism, skill development, policy research, youth engagement, environmental sustainability and collaborative partnerships with government institutions, academic bodies, industry and civil society organisations.

Speaking on the occasion, LEAD Convenor Harinder Gupta reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to promoting evidence-based policy research, strengthening local enterprises, supporting startups, encourag-



ing youth leadership and facilitating sustainable economic opportunities across the region.

Addressing the gathering, Arun Kumar Manhas, Director, Industries & Commerce, Jammu congratulated the LEAD team and appreciated the organisation's efforts, stating that the Industries & Commerce Department continues to support LEAD's initiatives in promoting entrepreneurship and economic development.

Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner, Jammu commended LEAD for its remarkable contribution to regional development.

He said he has been associated with LEAD's initiatives from the beginning. He particularly appreciated Mahotsav – Jammu Kashmir Ladakh, describing it as one of Jammu's most significant public events that has successfully showcased the region's entrepreneurship, culture, tourism, handicrafts, agriculture, cuisine

and local enterprises.

LEAD Board Member Sanjeev Sharma noted that the Annual Smarika serves not only as a record of LEAD's initiatives but also as a valuable knowledge resource documenting best practices, success stories, research insights, and future development priorities. He thanked Hon'ble LG, Manoj Sinha for his cover message for this year's Smarika as he praised LEAD present work and his good wishes for LEAD's future initiatives.

Delivering the vote of thanks, LEAD Board Member Raman Suri expressed his gratitude to the Chief Guest, Guest of Honour, distinguished guests, partners and participants for their support and presence at the event.

The event was anchored by Vishal Abrol, Coordinator – Real Estate & Housing, LEAD, who conducted the proceedings and ensured the smooth flow of the programme. The event was attended by LEAD Board

Members Ramesh Kumar Chibber, Kamal Kishore Sharma, Surinder Mohan Gupta, Rajesh Gupta, CA Rajeev Gupta, Vikram Gujral, Col. Ajat Shatroot Jarmwal, Parveen Pargal along with Executive Officer Alankrit Mahajan, LEAD Executive Members, distinguished dignitaries, policymakers, academicians, entrepreneurs, industry representatives, civil society members and development professionals.

LEAD (LJK Economic Growth and Development Dialogue) is a development think tank dedicated to promoting inclusive economic growth, entrepreneurship, innovation and sustainable development across the Union Territories of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Through research, policy dialogue, capacity building and multi-stakeholder partnerships, LEAD works to strengthen local ecosystems and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for communities across the region.

Chief Secretary inaugurates IFAD Project Partners' Learning Forum 2026 at SKICC

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The two day IFAD Project Partners' Learning Forum 2026, organised by the Mission Directorate, Jammu & Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement Project (JKCIP)/Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) under the Agriculture Production Department, commenced today at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar.

The Learning Forum, centred on the theme "Celebrating the International Year of Women Farmers: Empowering Women, Transforming Agriculture," was attended by the senior government officials, representatives of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Project Directors from IFAD-supported projects across India, development professionals, Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to deliberate on innovative approaches towards inclusive and sustainable agricultural development.

The inaugural session was presided over by Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, who formally inaugurated the Learning Forum and addressed the gathering.

In his keynote address, the Chief Secretary highlighted the transformative role of technology, innovation and institutional convergence in strengthening the agriculture sector. He emphasised the need for greater collaboration among the government institutions, development partners and farming communities to build resilient and market-oriented agricultural systems.

Atal Dulloo also underscored the importance of women farmers as catalysts of rural transformation. He reiterated the government's commitment to



wards empowering them through technology, capacity building and entrepreneurship.

The gathering was also addressed by Professor Nazir Ahmad Ganie, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Kashmir, who emphasised the critical role of research, innovation and scientific interventions in enhancing the agricultural productivity and sustainability. He stressed the importance of stronger linkages between research institutions, extension agencies and farmers to accelerate the adoption of modern technologies and improve rural livelihoods.

Earlier, Dr. Sagar D. Dattatray, Mission Director, HADP/ JKCIP, outlined the objectives of the Learning Forum. He highlighted the significant progress achieved under JKCIP in strengthening the institutional systems, promoting digital agriculture, supporting Farmer Producer Organisations, nurturing agri-startups and creating sustainable livelihood opportunities across Jammu & Kashmir.

James Marc de Sousa-Shields, Country Director, IFAD India, also addressed the participants and reiterated IFAD's commitment towards supporting inclusive rural transformation through partnerships, in-

novation and knowledge sharing. He appreciated the progress made by JKCIP in establishing a robust digital ecosystem and community-driven implementation model.

A major highlight of the inaugural session was the launch of three key knowledge and digital initiatives under JKCIP. The dignitaries unveiled the fourth issue of JKCIP Pulse, the project's quarterly knowledge newsletter documenting innovations, field experiences and institutional learning. They also released the JKCIP Annual Report 2025–26, showcasing the project's achievements during its first full year of implementation.

The occasion further witnessed the launch of Krishi Mitra AI, an AI-powered Crop Advisory and Leaf Diagnosis Platform developed in-house to provide intelligent, personalised and data-driven advisory services to farmers through the JKCIP Digital Ecosystem.

The forum also featured an exhibition showcasing innovation and entrepreneurship in agriculture. Ten startups supported under JKCIP displayed their technologies, products and solutions spanning precision agriculture, agri-processing, digital services and value addition. Besides,

five Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) showcased a diverse range of high-value agricultural and horticultural products, demonstrating the growing strength of collective farmer enterprises in Jammu & Kashmir.

In addition, thematic exhibition stalls were established by the Department of Agriculture Kashmir, Department of Horticulture Kashmir and the Horticulture Planning & Marketing Department (HPM), highlighting flagship initiatives, farmer-centric interventions and value chain development efforts undertaken across the Union Territory.

The first day concluded with technical interactions, networking sessions and knowledge exchange among project leaders from across the country, laying the foundation for deeper collaboration and shared learning during the remaining sessions of the forum.

The second day of the Learning Forum will feature thematic discussions, experience-sharing sessions by IFAD-assisted projects from different states and field visits to successful Farmer Producer Organisations, agri-startups and Centres of Excellence supported under JKCIP.

PD&SJ Ganderbal holds preparatory meetings with major stake holders on 'Mediation for Nation Drive 3.0' Campaign

GANDERBAL, AUGUST 06: In furtherance of the nationwide initiative "Mediation for Nation drive 3.0", Principal District & Sessions Judge (Coordinator District Mediation Center), Ganderbal, chaired two consecutive meetings today, with Judicial Officers and Members of the Bar Association, to make them aware regarding the implementation of Mediation for Nation Drive 3.0 initiative, pursuant to the directions from the Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority regarding the launch of the campaign under the guidance of the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC), Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

As part of the preparatory cum awareness process two separate meetings were convened under the chairmanship of Abdul Nasir, Principal District & Sessions (PD&SJ) Judge, Ganderbal.

The first meeting was chaired by the PD&SJ and was attended by Secretary DLSA Ganderbal Sheikh Babar Hussain and members of Bar Association, Trained mediators and Legal Aid Defense Counsels of the District.

The second meeting was convened with all the Judicial Officers of District Ganderbal, including Fozia Foul, Additional District & Sessions Judge, Ganderbal; Nusrat Ali Hakak, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Ganderbal; Sheikh Babar Husain, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Ganderbal; Mahoor, Munsiff, Ganderbal.

While addressing the participants in both meetings, the PD&SJ, highlighted the significance of the "Mediation for Nation Drive 3.0" and called upon Judicial Officers, members of the Bar, Legal Aid Defense Counsels, and Panel Mediators to extend their wholehearted cooperation for its successful implementation by involving themselves actively for this noble initiative. He emphasized that mediation is an effective, speedy, confidential, and amicable mode of dispute resolution that not only preserves relationships but also reduces the burden of litigation and ensures timely justice, as well as maintains harmony between the parties.

The participants were also apprised of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the nationwide



campaign. It was informed that during the period from 1st August to 30th September, 2026, emphasis shall be laid on identifying pending cases having an element of settlement, conducting pre-mediation screening, issuing notices to parties, referring fit cases to mediation centers, undertaking awareness and outreach activities, and publishing the list of identified cases on the notice boards of the Courts, Bar Associations and official websites. The nationwide mediation drive has commenced from 1st August, 2026, with regular transmission of progress reports to the Mediation and Conciliation Project Committee (MCPC), Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

The Coordinator District Mediation Center also focused on the need for collective and coordinated efforts by Judicial Officers, advocates, mediators, Legal Aid Defense Counsels, Para Legal Volunteers, Law Students and other stakeholders in identifying suitable matters and creating greater awareness among litigants regarding the benefits of mediation.

He directed that pending civil,

matrimonial, commercial, consumer, motor accident claims, cheque dishonor, partition, property and other compoundable or settlement-oriented matters be thoroughly scrutinized and cases suitable for mediation be identified for referral to the District Mediation Centre, Ganderbal, in accordance with the applicable rules and directions of the Supreme Court of India and the Hon'ble High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The drive also aims to encourage the Bar Association and Panel Mediators to play an active role in identifying suitable matters, facilitating meaningful dialogue between parties and creating awareness regarding mediation as an efficient and cost-effective means of dispute resolution.

The Coordinator District Mediation Center has further sought category-wise data of pending matters suitable for mediation from the concerned Courts for onward transmission to the J&K Legal Services Authority and coordination with the Main Mediation Centre, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Wildlife Division Shopian conducts Capacity Building Workshop on Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation

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In pursuance of the directions of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (HoFF) and Chief Wildlife Warden, Sunesh Bakhshi, and under the guidance of Regional Wildlife Warden, Kashmir Region, Tawheed Ahmad Deva, the Wildlife Division Shopian today organized a one-day Workshop-cum-Orientation Programme on Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation and Wildlife Management at Conservation Breeding Centre (CBC), Shikargah, Tral, in collaboration with Wildlife SOS, Jammu & Kashmir.

The programme was organized with the primary objective of enhancing the professional skills and operational preparedness of frontline wildlife staff engaged in wildlife rescue, conflict mitigation, tranquilization, monitoring, and scientific wildlife management.

The workshop was attended by Sohail Ahmad Wagay, ACF, Wildlife Warden Shopian; Feroz Nazir, Range Officer, Tral; Mohd. Younis Bhat, Range Officer, Khangund; Dr. Mohsin Gazi, MVSC, Departmental Veterinarian; Aliya Mir, Head, Wildlife SOS J&K and Member, Wildlife Board officers and officials of the Wildlife Protection Department, experts from Wildlife SOS, and frontline field staff of the Wildlife Division Shopian.

Welcoming the participants, Sohail Ahmad Wa-



gay, ACF, highlighted the growing challenges posed by increasing human-wildlife interactions and emphasized the need for continuous capacity building of frontline personnel. He stressed that well-trained staff equipped with modern rescue techniques and scientific knowledge are essential for minimizing response time during wildlife emergencies, ensuring public safety, and safeguarding wild animals during rescue operations.

During the technical sessions, Dr. Mohsin Gazi imparted extensive hands-on training on wildlife tranquilization, chemical immobilization, physical restraint techniques, safe handling protocols, dosage calculations, darting procedures, and post-rescue animal care. The practical demonstrations enabled the participants to familiarize themselves with modern tranquilization equip-

ment and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for safely rescuing wild animals.

Addressing the participants, Aliya Mir, Head, Wildlife SOS J&K, deliberated on modern approaches to wildlife conservation, community participation, and effective human-wildlife conflict mitigation strategies. She emphasized preventive measures to reduce wildlife encounters, awareness generation among local communities, and the importance of scientific wildlife management in ensuring peaceful coexistence between humans and wildlife. During her session, live demonstrations of different snake species commonly found in Jammu & Kashmir were conducted, wherein participants were acquainted with their distinguishing characteristics, methods for identifying venomous

and non-venomous snakes, their ecological significance, safety precautions, and appropriate rescue and handling protocols. The participants were also sensitized about snakebite prevention, emergency response measures, and the important ecological role of snakes in maintaining a balanced ecosystem.

Experts from Wildlife SOS further demonstrated the operation and field application of modern conservation and monitoring equipment, including GPS devices, camera traps, radio-collaring techniques, rescue equipment, and wildlife monitoring tools. The participants received practical exposure to rescue methodologies, conflict response protocols, wildlife tracking, safe extraction techniques for wild animals straying into human habitations, and the use of modern rescue and immobilization equipment.