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P10 | LEH
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SKUAST-Kashmir kicks off two-day training programme on 'Revival and Promotion of Millets' at KVK Gurez

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BANDIPORA: The Faculty of Agriculture (FoA), Wadura, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-Kashmir), in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)/Mountain Agriculture Research and Extension Station (MAR&ES), Gurez, on Wednesday commenced a two-day training programme on the revival and promotion of millets (nutri-cereals) in Jammu and Kashmir.

The programme witnessed active participation from postgraduate students, Ph.D. scholars, project staff, progressive farm-women, innovative farmers, and scientific and technical personnel from various subject matter divisions of FoA, Wadura, and KVK/MAR&ES Gurez.

Prof. Lal Singh, Chief Scientist-cum-Principal Investigator, HADP-08, highlighted the importance of millets in the context of changing climatic conditions. Through a detailed presentation, he underlined the potential of these resilient and nutritious crops under the agro-climatic conditions of Gurez, emphasising their adaptability, health benefits, market prospects and industrial potential. He also stressed the role of value addition, product development, proper labelling and branding in enhancing the commercial viability of millets and strengthening farmers' livelihoods.

Senior Scientist and Head, KVK/MAR&ES Gurez, Dr. Hilal Ahmad Malik, underscored the importance of introducing innovative agricultural technologies developed by SKUAST-Kashmir to expand livelihood opportunities for the tribal community. He said the Kendra, under the leadership of Vice-Chancellor Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai and with the support of Director Extension Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Research Prof. Syed Zameer and Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, Prof. Najeeb Ul Rehman Sofi, remains committed to the revival and promotion of heritage crops across Gurez Valley.

Ministry of Tribal Affairs organises One-Day Interaction Programme with ST Beneficiaries, FRA title holders at Budgam

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BUDGAM: Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, organised a interaction programme with Scheduled Tribe (ST) beneficiaries and Forest Rights Act title holders of Sub-Division Khansahib in district Budgam to raise awareness about the Forest Rights Act (FRA), facilitate awareness regarding the process of filing and obtaining forest rights claims, and highlight various welfare initiatives aimed at the socio-economic development of tribal communities.

Under Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, Shambhu Nath Pal, attended the programme as the Chief Guest. Upon his arrival at the venue, he inspected stalls showcasing locally cultivated products and other items produced by members of the Scheduled Tribe community. The exhibition highlighted the local livelihood activities, traditional skills and economic potential of the tribal population.

During the programme, Shambhu Nath Pal held detailed deliberations on the provisions of the Forest Rights Act, with particular emphasis on Community Forest Rights (CFR) and Individual Forest Rights (IFR). He sensitised the participants about the objectives and scope of the Act and explained the procedure for filing claims, documentation required, and the process involved in securing eligible forest rights under the prescribed framework. He also interacted with the beneficiaries and emphasised the importance of awareness, proper guidance and coordination among the concerned departments to ensure that eligible members of the Scheduled Tribe community are able to understand and access the benefits available to them under the Act.

Dr. Basharat Hussain, Secretary Tribal Affairs Advisory Board, also addressed the gathering and spoke about the significance of the Forest Rights Act and its potential to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of tribal communities. He highlighted the benefits of the Act and stressed the need to enhance awareness among eligible beneficiaries so that they could avail themselves of their entitlements in accordance with the prescribed provisions. Earlier, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate Khansahib, Jahangir Ahmad Giri briefed the visiting officer about the demographic profile of the Scheduled Tribe population in the region, their socio-economic conditions and the developmental initiatives being undertaken for their welfare. He also outlined various government welfare schemes and departmental interventions aimed at promoting community development, improving livelihood opportunities and ensuring the overall upliftment of tribal households in the subdivision.

The programme also provided an opportunity for beneficiaries to share their experiences and express their views regarding the implementation of the Forest Rights Act. Several FRA beneficiaries spoke about the benefits they had received after obtaining their forest rights and expressed gratitude to the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the District Administration Budgam and the Sub-Divisional Administration Khansahib for their support and facilitation.

The beneficiaries highlighted the importance of such interaction programmes in bridging the gap between the administration and the community, addressing concerns at the grassroots level and ensuring that information about government initiatives reaches the intended beneficiaries.

The interaction programme witnessed the participation of officers from departments, including the Deputy Director, Employment, Budgam; Tehsildar, Khansahib; District Coordinator, National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM); and other district and sub-divisional officers.

DDC Kulgam conducts inspection of JJM Water Supply schemes in Kulgam

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KULGAM: District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam (Chairman District Jal Jeevan Mission), Shahzad Alam today conducted a extensive tour in Kulgam to inspect the progress of various water supply schemes (WSS) being implemented under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM).

The DDC conducted onsite reviews of civil, mechanical and groundwater works of WSS Lankar Pombay and Khalura, WSS Banimulla GB, WSS Banimula, WSS Ashthal GB and WSS Laisoo GB.

During the inspection, Shahzad Alam reviewed the physical progress on the ground, evaluated ongoing construction and installation activities, and assessed the operational readiness of the infrastructure. Interacting with the engineering team, he assessed progress against prescribed timelines and highlighted the necessity of adhering strictly to approved standards of work execution.

Reiterating the core objective of the Jal Jeevan Mission, to ensure reliable, safe, and sustainable tap drinking water to every rural household, the DDC directed officers to expedite the pace of work and ensure strict monitoring to prevent any avoidable delays.

He further tasked the engineering staff with maintaining close oversight of ongoing projects to guarantee that the newly created infrastructure effectively fulfills its target of delivering safe drinking water to all targeted habitations across Kulgam district.

Executive Engineer PHE Division Kulgam, Project Manager DPMU Kulgam, Assistant Executive Engineers (AEE) of Damhal and Kulgam, AEE PHE Mechanical, and Junior Engineers of the concerned jurisdictions attended the inspection visits.

District Treasury Shopian organises Training on JKIFMS Digital Financial Modules for DDOs, dealing assistants

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SHOPIAN: District Treasury Shopian is conducting a capacity-building and training programme for Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) and concerned dealing assistants on the implementation of digital financial modules under the Jammu and Kashmir Integrated Financial Management System (JKIFMS).

The training programme which commenced on October 19 and will continue up to October 27, 2026 was inaugurated by District Treasury Officer (DTO) Shopian, Omar Javaid at the office premises of District Treasury Shopian.

While speaking on the occasion, DTO Shopian highlighted the importance of effective adoption of digital financial systems for streamlining government financial transactions and improving efficiency, transparency and accountability in the delivery of financial services.

He stressed upon the participating officials to make full use of the training sessions and develop adequate familiarity with the new digital modules for their effective implementation.

The programme focuses on the implementation and operational aspects of e-Bill, e-Voucher, e-Receipt and e-Account modules, aimed at facilitating a smooth transition towards efficient and fully digitised financial management processes.

During the sessions, participating DDOs and dealing assistants are being familiarised with the workflow and procedures associated with the digital modules, besides being provided guidance on their effective utilisation in day-to-day financial transactions.

Agriculture Department Kashmir launches Khet Bachao Abhiyan campaign

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Department Kashmir today launched Khet Bachao Abhiyan and the campaign will run from October, 22 to November, 30 in every village of the valley.

The main event was organised in District Bandipora and Project Coordinator Mushroom, Kashmir was the chief guest on the occasion.

Main objective of the Abhiyan is to generate awareness among farming community about the balanced and judicious use of fertilizers and other agricultural inputs. It also aims to promote crop diversification through oilseed, pulse and encourage the effective utilization of fallow fields after paddy harvesting and promote proper crop residue management. The campaign will also focus on capacity building of farmers in the appropriate use of organic and bio-based agricultural products and promoting natural farming through awareness programmes, training sessions and field demonstrations.

One of the important objectives is to improve soil health, promote the balanced use of fertilizers and other agricultural inputs, enhance water-use efficiency, and encourage the adoption of resource-efficient and climate-resilient farming practices.

Special emphasis will be placed on creating awareness about the appropriate use of fertilizers, including green ammonia, and biological products; water conservation; crop diversification and intercropping with suitable crops and varieties; efficient utilization of rice fallows; natural farming; and integrated farming systems. Capacity building, farm mechanization and field demonstrations of improved technologies, including regenerative agriculture practices, will also form key components of the campaign.

JKRLM to host Saras Mela from October 25 in Srinagar

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SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM), Department of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj is set to organise SARAS AAJEEVIKA Kashmir 2026 from October 25 at Polo View Park, Srinagar, bringing together rural entrepreneurs, artisans and culinary traditions from across India.

The ten-day exhibition will offer visitors an opportunity to experience the country's diverse crafts, handloom traditions and regional cuisines under one roof.

Building on the success of previous editions, the mela will feature around 70-80 stalls, with participation from several states and Union Territories, alongside line departments from Jammu and Kashmir. The exhibition will provide a platform for women associated with Self-Help Groups (SHGs) under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) to display and sell their products, connect with consumers and explore opportunities to expand their enterprises.

Participants from states including Telangana, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Jharkhand ,Tripura Odisha and Uttar Pradesh, among others, will showcase products reflecting their regions' traditional skills and local resources. The exhibits will include Pochampally Ikat sarees, Banarasi textiles, Chikankari embroidery, traditional jewellery, handicrafts, home décor, jute products and other eco-friendly goods.

A major attraction of the exhibition will be the Umeed Ka Zaika Food Court, which will bring regional culinary traditions to Srinagar through food enterprises led by women associated with the SHG movement. Visitors will be able to sample traditional delicacies from Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, alongside the cuisine of Jammu and Kashmir. Umeed ka Ziaka initiative is strengthened by JKRLM through capacity-building, improved quality standards and wider market linkages, helping SHG women turn their culinary expertise into sustainable businesses.

The ten-day event will also feature cultural and entertainment programmes, along with structured capacity-building sessions for SHG members on key livelihood themes. Expert resource persons will conduct sessions intended to strengthen participants' understanding of enterprise development and help them identify ways to improve their products and business practices.

Mission Director JKRLM, Dr. Shubhra Sharma, said SARAS AAJEEVIKA is an important opportunity for SHG members to gain exposure to wider markets, understand consumer preferences and learn about quality standards, product diversification and marketing strategies."Every product displayed at SARAS carries a story of the woman behind it, the skills she has developed, the effort she has invested and the confidence she has gained in building an enterprise of her own. The mela is not simply about showcasing products; it is about recognising the journey through which women, supported by the SHG movement, are finding their place as productive and independent contributors to society," the Mission Director said.

Emphasising the wider cultural significance of the event, the Mission Director said SARAS offers visitors an opportunity to experience the traditions of different parts of the country in one place."When people from different states come together, they bring with them much more than their products. They bring their traditions, their food, their craftsmanship and their ways of life. Such events allow us to appreciate cultures beyond our own and in the process, understand our own heritage better," Dr. Sharma said.

As Srinagar enters the autumn season, the mela will bring together the colours of India's handlooms, the flavours of its regional cuisines and the entrepreneurial aspirations of rural women, placing their work and achievements at the centre of a shared cultural experience.

Information Department Kulgam organises awareness programme on conservation of Biodiversity, Wildlife at GDC D.H. Pora

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

KULGAM: Information Department Kulgam, in collaboration with Government Degree College (GDC) D.H. Pora, today organised an awareness programme on forests, biodiversity and wildlife conservation at Degree College, DH Pora.

DIO Kulgam, Showkat Hussain Ganie, in his inaugural address, highlighted the vital role of forests in maintaining ecological balance, regulating climate, conserving soil and water resources, and sustaining diverse forms of life. He stressed the importance of protecting the region's rich biodiversity and wildlife habitats from deforestation, forest fires, pollution and human interference. He also emphasised the need to promote environmental awareness among youth and encouraged students to act as ambassadors of conservation by adopting eco-friendly practices and spreading awareness in their communities.

During the programme, five students delivered speeches on various aspects of forest conservation, biodiversity protection and wildlife preservation. They highlighted the importance of protecting endangered species, conserving natural habitats, preventing illegal hunting, reducing plastic pollution and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. The students also underlined the role of community participation and individual responsibility in addressing environmental challenges and safeguarding the natural heritage for future generations.

Pamphlets highlighting the importance of forest conservation, biodiversity protection and wildlife preservation were also distributed among the students to further spread awareness about environmental protection and encourage responsible practices.

Principal GDC D.H. Pora, Professor Abdul Salam Dar, in his address, underscored the importance of environmental education in developing responsible and environmentally conscious citizens. He stressed that educational institutions have a significant role in nurturing a conservation-oriented mindset among students and encouraging them to contribute towards protecting forests, wildlife and biodiversity. He appreciated the initiative of the Information Department Kulgam for organising the programme in collaboration with the college.

Dr. Aftab, Assistant Professor in Environmental Sciences, highlighted the importance of preserving forests, biodiversity and wildlife, emphasising the need for environmental awareness and collective efforts towards conservation.

At the conclusion, the participating students were felicitated with mementoes in recognition of their participation, while Dr. Aftab was also felicitated by the DIO Kulgam and the Principal with a memento in appreciation of his contribution to the successful conduct of the programme.

Other faculty members, staff and students in large numbers attended the programme.

Awantipora Police Organises exhibition highlighting contributions of Police Martyrs at DPL Awantipora

■ EARTH NEWS SERVICE

AWANTIPORA: As part of the ongoing Police Flag Day Week celebrations, Police District Awantipora organised an exhibition highlighting the valour, sacrifices and contributions of Police Martyrs at District Police Lines (DPL) Awantipora.

The exhibition witnessed the participation of family members of Police Martyrs and respectable citizens from different areas of Police District Awantipora. On the occasion, floral tributes were paid to the Martyrs in recognition of their supreme sacrifices in the line of duty for the nation.

During the exhibition, videos and stories depicting the bravery, courage and supreme sacrifices of Police Martyrs were showcased, reminding participants of their dedication and commitment to safeguarding the nation.

At the outset, participants were introduced to the concept and functioning of the Savera Cell, with emphasis on strengthening the bond between the Police and the families of Martyrs. Various welfare schemes and initiatives aimed at supporting the families of Police Martyrs were also discussed.

The exhibition served as a tribute to the sacrifices of Police Martyrs and reaffirmed the commitment of Awantipora Police to honouring their legacy and ensuring the welfare of their families.