

THE ATTACK COULD BE RELATED TO THE RECENT SPOTTING OF A GROUP OF TERRORISTS ROAMING THE FORESTS FROM THANAMANDI AREA OF THE RAJOURI DISTRICT UPTO BAFLIAZ IN POONCH DISTRICT.

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KASHMIR CENTRAL

THE DANGEROUS GAPS

The recent terrorist attack on an isolated non-BP army vehicle near Bimargali in Poonch, just ahead of the G-20 Summit at Srinagar, warrants a critical analysis. We zoom in on the dangerous security lapses.

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KASHMIR CENTRAL



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VOLUME 3 | EDITION 18
30 APRIL 2023

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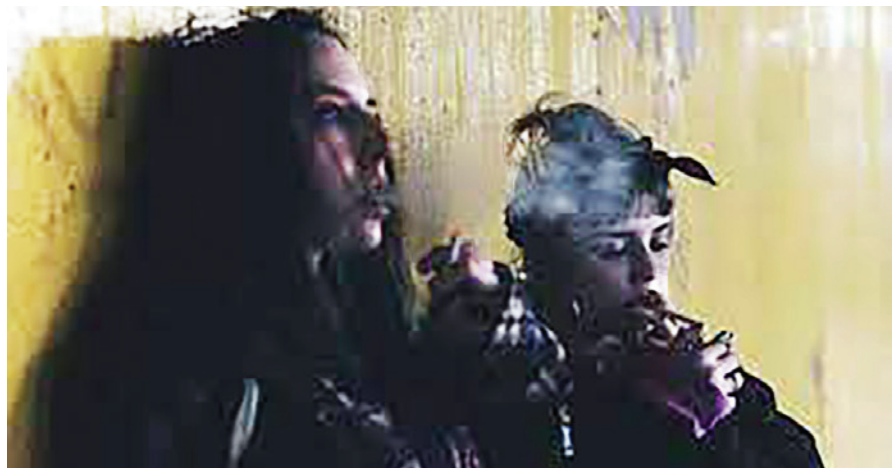
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DON'T BE DRUGGED INTO SILENCE

The drug menace is touching dangerous levels in Kashmir and government policies alone won't curb it. Let us all wake up and raise a voice against it we don't want it to eat into our system.



KASHMIR has emerged as the country's Number One drug-affected region with more than 2.5 percent of the population using drugs. It has surpassed Punjab where the average drug users count to 1.2 percent. Superficially, the wide spread of drug abuse is attributed to the violent conflict, large-scale unemployment, stressful social life, uncertainties in family life, influence of peers, so on and so forth. The credible and not-so-credible reports about drug abuse emanating from different parts of Kashmir, and that too on a daily basis, somehow suggest that the menace is more widespread in the pockets which were earlier infamous for violence and violent protests.

Sopore in North Kashmir is a typical case study. The apple town is reeling under drug abuse. Earlier it was most infamous for violence, stone-pelting, frequent shutdowns and the disruption of life was considered a normal in the area.

South Kashmir too presents more or less the same picture. The areas which were earlier more into violence are the most affected by drug menace. In fact, the use of drugs and trafficking took off initially from the pockets where the influence of extremist thought processes was intense. This is the inconvenient truth - that militancy and drug abuse are directly related to each other. The reality should be accepted; the sooner, the better. This is precisely why the response to such a dangerous, widespread menace is mute. The fear of non-state actors who are direct beneficiaries of drug trafficking and drug-peddling, does not permit the society to raise a voice against the menace. The drug menace is consuming the Kashmiri youth very fast and is eating up the vitals of the society.

Government efforts alone cannot bring results if the society does not wake up. Let us stop constructing conspiracy theories, stop pretending unaffected, and let us accept the harsh reality and raise our voice against the menace.

Bashir Assad

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THE LAPSE OF BEING LAIDBACK

The recent attack on an army vehicle in the border district of Poonch in Pirpanchal region points at lapses in security, human intelligence and the overall attitude of alertness. The consequences have been telling on the security situation of this Himalayan region. We analyse the attack and the many gaps gaping through.

by **Bashir Assad**

THE recent terrorist attack on an isolated non-BP army vehicle near Bimargali in Poonch in which five jawans were killed on the spot and one critically wounded, ahead of the G20 Summit slated to be held at Srinagar later in the month of May, warrants a critical analysis. And yes, heads should certainly roll to avoid repetition of such dastardly acts. The attack should also be seen as an eye-



opener at least in the context of the fragility of the prevalent peaceful environment. Here, we try to put things in perspective for better understanding of the dynamics of this attack.

THERE WERE WARNINGS

In February 2023, Kashmir Central, while quoting sources in the police and intelligence agencies, revealed that a group of terrorists was roaming the forests from Thanamandi area of the Rajouri district upto Bafliaz in Poonch district. The group had been sighted deep into the forests, by locals, on many occasions. Among other things, KC had rung alarm bells about the terrorists mingling with the inhabitants in the upper reaches, which could have dangerous consequences. This mingling with the locals in the upper reaches, we had cautioned, could help the terrorists build a network in the region which has remained terrorist-free for nearly a decade. Now see, the terrorists chose an isolated security vehicle, which, plying without an ROP in the area just a few miles away from the Line of Control (LoC), is the proverbial 'aa bail mujhe maar' (come and kill). This certainly raises some uncomfortable questions. How come the vehicle was allowed to move when there was no ROP along the route? What was the urgency of allowing a single vehicle to move at the time when the visibility

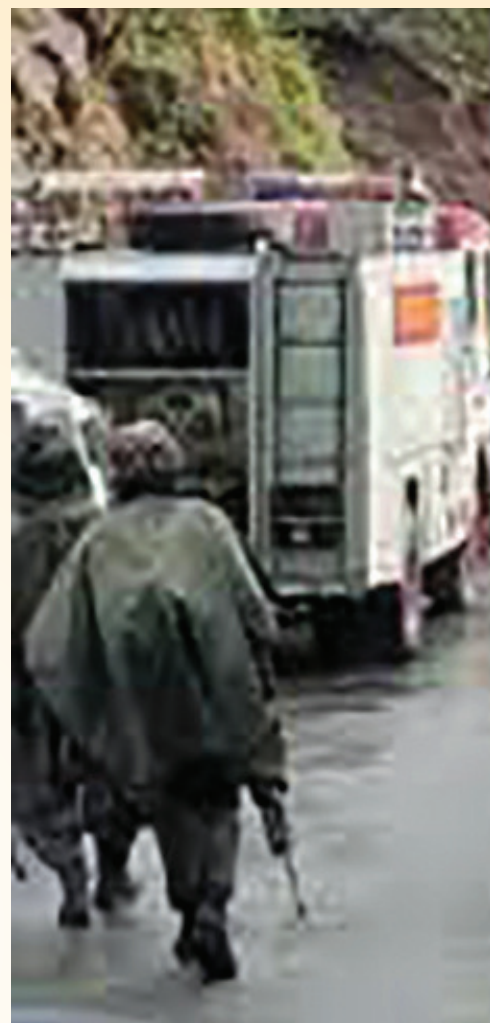
was poor, given the fact that the weather was cloudy and it was raining? Beyond these legitimate questions, we need to look into the promptness and quick response of the terrorists in attacking the vehicle. The only way for us to explain this incident is that the terrorists did strike only after gathering information from their assets along the route.

As mentioned, the terrorists are in the area for the last one year and a half. It cannot be ruled out that it is the same group that attacked the security forces in the later part of the year 2021 and killed at least 8 jawans close to the LoC before the renewal of the ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan in February 2022.

According to credible sources, the attack on the army vehicle was carried out by the same group of terrorists who had been floating around the forests. The attack was obviously not a result of the fresh infiltration, as claimed by most media houses. We can only say that the terrorists present in the area have created their assets within the local population during this period, which could pose a greater challenge to the security in the coming days and months.

MOMENTARY LAPSE OF REASON?

Coming to the 'lapses', yes, there can't be a foolproof security and intelligence grid. This is not possible even for



the most advanced countries boasting the most sophisticated human and artificial intelligence. So, let's talk about the loopholes alone which are quite evident.

Usually there are three domains of security and intelligence grid.

The primary domain is of the local police station, police post, the army unit of the area. In this domain, unfortunately there are visible distractions, post the abrogation of Article 370. This domain is more into normal policing. Focus rests on petty crimes and criminals, civil disputes, matrimonial disputes, etc. It looks like the police



stations are no more a part of the anti-insurgency grid. The Jammu and Kashmir region is facing two major challenges of cross-border terrorism and narcotic smuggling. On both fronts, the police stations across the region are not so active. Of course, their involvement in curbing other crimes is commendable. In fact, their serious efforts are containing the drug peddling. However, there is some deviation as far as the police stations being part of the major security grid is concerned. I really don't know whether this impression is an outcome of some government policy.

As for the secondary domain, the intelligence agencies (national and regional) are the most important, pivotal and indispensable part of the security grid against terrorism and its ecosystem. It has again two domains: preventive intelligence and post incident analysis. It is very disturbing to observe that there was no intelligence input on the Poonch attack which certainly could have helped in preventing the tragic incident. Drones aren't much help detecting terrorists hiding in a dense forest area. The Spring season and greenery in the Poonch and Rajouri

districts come much earlier than in the Kashmir region. At this stage, we have a complete green cover in Rajouri and Poonch districts as compared to the Kashmir division. So drones are of no help. So again, one has to rely on human intelligence. The security and intelligence agencies, not realising their immense role in fighting terrorism, have, to a great extent, lost their human assets over a period of time. If the intelligence agencies of our country could instill fear among the terrorists sitting in Pakistan, and make them run for their lives and create a situation of insecurity for



them within Pakistan, why is there this impression of losing human resource in the hinterland? What I understand is that the law enforcing agencies like Enforcement Directorate (ED), National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the CBI, during the last three or four years, have intensified their efforts in wiping out the terror ecosystem, and their activities have, to a great extent, crippled the support system to terrorism. The support system has been, to a large extent, shattered and pushed to the margins. The narrative too has lost dominance. It has certainly brought the overall situation to a point where we usually, as human beings, start presuming that the situation is under our control. This presumption, I am afraid, has inculcated a culture of being a little laidback among the intelligence agencies. Not much attention is being paid to building the human intelligence

grid which has no alternative. On the other hand, terrorists still rely on human networking. It is perhaps because of this complacency that basic preventive intelligence, the backbone of any policy planning, is missing.

We know that 100% deterrence is not possible. There were intelligence inputs about the Pulwama attack in February 2019; yet the incident took place. But preventive intelligence, undeniably, is a pre-requisite for an efficient security grid. What is being observed is that the intelligence agencies are quick and prompt in generating intelligence with regard to normal crimes. But there is some laziness in generating actionable intelligence for counter-terror operations.

Post incident analysis, I am sorry to say, has little bearings. That said, the terrorists and their handlers across

the borders have tactically retreated. There is an opinion that the militancy related incidents in the Kashmir valley have gone to zero level because terrorists are not striking. It would be a little crazy to claim that they are not allowed to do so.

That said, some insiders attribute the failure to what they call 'fiddling' with the set mechanism of operational procedures, to the culture of experimentation and adventurism. People at the policy planning level are more into going for new experiments rather than strengthening the set procedures. There are distractions and deviations and in the process, important threads are lost.

The third domain is the backup of the technical and artificial intelligence. On this front, the country has advanced remarkably. We have very active cyber cells. But again, certain things, because of their geographic or strategic components, are beyond the purview of this domain. The Poonch attack has, once again, brought to the fore this fundamental observation that human intelligence has no replacement.

Finally, there has to be an honest investigation into this incident and responsibility has to be fixed to avoid repetition of such dastardly acts in the future.

SETTING up for the BEST SHOT

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by **Bisma Nazir**

Srinagar is all set to host the G-20 Summit under the Tourism sector and the government is taking its best shot in ensuring that the guest countries get more than interested in the Valley as a destination for shooting films.

▼
AFTER assuming the presidency of G-20 in December 2022, New Delhi has prioritised Kashmir as the global film destination and for event tourism.

Only three places in the country were identified for G-20 conferences in the Tourism sector - Rann of Kutch (Gujarat), Siliguri (West Bengal) and Srinagar (Jammu and Kashmir).

The conferences have already been convened in Rann of Kutch

and Siliguri in February and April respectively. The third is scheduled to be held in Srinagar between May 22 and 24.

This is the first-of-its-kind high profile international event that Srinagar is set to host post the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A on August 5, 2019.

Besides the member countries that include Germany, France, China, Italy, Argentine, Canada, Brazil, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Russia, Japan, Turkey, Mexico, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States and the European Union, New Delhi has invited UAE, Oman, Singapore, Spain, Mauritius, Netherlands, Nigeria, Bangladesh and Egypt as special guests to the Srinagar event. Around 150 delegates are likely to participate in the G-20 Srinagar event. There is an attempt to showcase Kashmir as a potential international tourism destination, particularly for shooting films because of its uniquely beautiful landscape.

The Jammu and Kashmir

government had recently formulated a film policy. The main highlight of the policy was the single window clearance for shooting films in Kashmir. The domestic film industries of Bollywood and Tollywood have already shown keen interest in Kashmir post the formulation of the policy.

Projecting and promoting Kashmir as an international film shooting destination in a big way by the governments in Srinagar and New Delhi, could be hugely beneficial to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The promotion certainly has huge financial implications for the government. It brings along the responsibility of providing facilities of international standards and create an impressive infrastructure to attract the international film community to Kashmir. The lyrical beauty, serene waters, lush green forests and snow-capped mountains of Kashmir offer great opportunities to filmmakers from across the

world to shoot films in Kashmir on a comparatively low cost as compared to some recognised European destinations. However, Nature alone doesn't suffice in the parameters of the international film community. You have to create a world class infrastructure and logistics for attracting the film industry. Besides creating the infrastructure, the government has to be conscious about the fragile environment. The international film community is expected to land in Srinagar only if the ecology is preserved and infrastructure is created.

The government is eyeing important partnerships under Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in the Tourism sector. It has already signed a number of MoUs with the UAE for creating infrastructure in hospitality and IT sectors. Because the scheduled event of G-20 is attended by many friendly countries besides the member countries of G-20, it is expected that a stage is set for





some joint ventures which could help in creating a world class infrastructure in the Kashmir valley. It is widely appreciated that the government of Jammu and Kashmir has consciously worked out a sight-seeing plan for the G20 delegates that could certainly inspire them to invest at least in this particular sector of hospitality. Also, it is unusual but very interesting to note that the government has arranged for the stay of the guests at Dachigam Park, which again, is an intelligent move aimed at taking the guests directly in proximity with Nature. The efforts are to inspire both member countries and the special invitees to invest in Kashmir.

As has been reported, the government has already sensitised various stakeholders in the Tourism sector to push for foreign investment in a big



way. Politics apart, the Srinagar summit is genuinely seen as a major and smart move to bring Kashmir on the international map in the Tourism sector, particularly in its promotion as a viable and a vibrant film shooting destination.

The government has put in place, elaborate security measures for the smooth conduct of this international event. Multi-tier security arrangements are being made in the wake of a possible

misadventure by those on the other side of the Border. The Srinagar civil and police administration are on tenterhooks in providing a congenial atmosphere - both from the security perspective, and logistics - for the conduct of the G-20 Summit. Major overhauling and revamping of the Srinagar city is going on with the agencies concerned working day and night to smarten it up. It is hoped that the event will be a huge success.

LET'S SAVE OUR SOULS

The recent sex scandals busted in the Valley are a serious pointer to the moral and spiritual degradation Kashmir as a society is seeing. If we don't stop, we are in for even darker times.

by **Mareaya Fayaz**

The murder of our moral and ethical culture

*Afu Khodaya fazal kar, badas ta janas,
Hyandis ta Musalmanas*

(God shower your grace on good and bad people alike, both on Hindus and on Muslims)

- *A prayer in the time of Sufis*

miss the times when everything used to be simple and clean in Kashmir. The days when people valued the moral and the ethical structure of the society. Preserving these values keeps us close to our basic Sufi sense for, that is what Kashmir and Kashmiris are known for... Kashmir is also called 'reshi waer' meaning the place of

rishis and the Sufi saints. As long as the influence of Sufism had been strong in Kashmir, the Valley never witnessed a moral or ethical dilemma. The society maintained its brotherhood - be it a Hindu a Muslim, a Sikh or a Christian... The more regressive the thoughts became, the more regressive crimes started happening in our society, the crimes we never imagined would take place.

THE HOPELESS DESCENT

Only this week I read a news piece about the sex scandal busted by the Jammu and Kashmir police in Handwara after the police received information from a source. The police arrested the house owner with his wife, who

was an accomplice, and also arrested the sex worker with two customers and Rs 47,800 cash. I was shocked at what I was reading! This is the third such sex racket the Jammu and Kashmir police have busted this month. Previously, a sex racket was busted in Nowgam area, another in Bhag-i-Mehtab area of Srinagar.

This piece is not about the news of such distortions of the society. This is to throw light on how, for a long time now, Kashmiris are murdering the moral and ethical fabric of their culture. How people have strangled the idea of brotherhood and brought on the pandemic of immorality upon themselves. The question is - how did Kashmir become a place deprived of all its fertility, morality and brotherhood, despite being known as a

paradise on earth?

T N Dhar Kundan, in one of his lectures on the old culture and literature of Kashmir, praises the Kashmiri society for its deep vision of brotherhood and moral and ethical sustainability. He states that when the Sufi culture became prominent in Kashmir, it coincided with the already prevalent tradition that stressed "seeking to refine deeper realisation of the Divine within one's consciousness rather than engaging in critical theological discussions; realizing the possibilities of the soul in solitude and silence; and to transform the flashing and fading moments of vision into a steady light that could illumine the long years of life". Thus was born a synthesised cultural system that we proudly refer to as 'the rishi cult'.



The daily activities of a typical Kashmiri could provide glimpses of this hybrid culture.

The post 1990 era has been one of upheaval, which has embarrassed the Valley's composite culture. The mutual trust, relationships, and understanding between individuals of different religions have been the worst casualties including our moral and ethical toms. To me, the day Kashmiris decided to divide themselves on the basis of religion, sect and castes is the day immorality started creeping into our social ethos. Kashmiris used to be watchdogs of one another because they used to care about what happens to their society but as soon as their bond broke and the idea of 'we don't care as long as we are safe' came in, the society's moral fabric broke. So I think, instead of blaming outer circumstances, the truth is that our society failed to protect itself from this growing immorality.

Given these considerations, it wouldn't be inaccurate to describe the current state of Kashmir as 'unreal'; a place that is gradually slipping from its lofty spiritual ideals.

The recent embarrassing sex scandals have caused our social order to break apart. We are selling our moral sensitivities. There is no doubt that this is taking place and has contributed to our society's heedless commercialisation and degeneration of human values. My land has a special significance. It has been



associated with righteousness and peace. But today's Kashmir is entirely different from what it was. Leave aside Sufis, there are no nice people in the modern world. The land has been fully taken over by individuals who don't care about wasting it, and it now serves as a haven for immorality and corruption, a place where human life has no value.

REACTIONS TO THE SCANDAL: SOME NOTES

▼ People have been commenting on this story and I don't see many people going to the root of this issue but just declaring online punishments like "hang the culprits" or "the private parts of men involved should be cut off" etc etc. Some have turned it into a battlefield between regions, which is pretty immature if you ask me. But the one reaction that I

was shocked to see was when someone commented on the 'provocative' dresses women wear; or something to the extent of saying that if women were not to charge money for sexual favours, this might not happen... This was something I did not know how to react to!

Women, during such issues, become an easy target and I have made this observation again and again.

Muzammil Maqbool, an advocate who lives in the same locality in which the Handwara sex racket was busted, has said : "We never knew that a sex racket was being run in the locality But yes the people involved already had a bad name here but we could never comprehend that they could go this far. The area, after this sex racket was busted, has earned a bad name though we are thankful to the police that they took action and busted the racket because if they didn't, we won't know how long this



would have continued”. He also said that they have held a meeting with their sarpanch and the elders of the locality and it has been decided that they would get a vigilance committee together so as to keep an eye on what’s going on in the locality. Also, they would be particular about verifying the credentials of anybody coming to rent a room or a house in their vicinity. He admitted that he was in shock that all this was done by a married couple. “What will the younger generation learn if this is what the elders are doing?” he asked.

A woman activist - Shabnum Dar from Hadipora - said: “I can’t believe how much our

society has degraded. We cannot guess who could be involved in such crimes; sometimes it could be one’s own relatives! Sex workers are sometimes brought into the profession by their own family members or relatives. And once they are in, they cannot get out. It could be for money or sometimes, they are simply blackmailed. So sex workers should be seen as victims and not always judged on the moral scale”.

Well, it’s certainly time we sat up and checked our moral metres before too long. Our spirituality and our religious rituals are of no use if we cannot practise them in every moment of our lives.



GOODBYE PLASTIC, HELLO GOLD!

by **Mian Tufail**

Sadiwara, a far-flung village in the Anantnag district has gone completely plastic-free, thanks to its 'Give Plastic, Take Gold' campaign started by its sarpanch – Farooq Ahmad Ganaie. And now, the village has inspired many others.



ADIWARA, a far-flung area of Jammu and Kashmir's Anantnag district, hasn't exactly been a privileged village by any standards. It's suffered all these years owing to the incompetence of its local leaders. Also, the village is out of bounds from the main district headquarters.

But well, finally, despite the indifference towards it, the village has had its share of achievements. And right now, the most talked about feat is this: It has been declared plastic-free, thanks to the latest innovative and pro-people initiatives.

A lot of credit for this feat goes to the village-resident Farooq Ahmad Ganaie, a lawyer by profession and the present sarpanch of the Sadiwara Panchayat. Farooq has come up with an innovative concept to contain solid waste and plastics.

Inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's addresses, Farooq had decided to contest a Panchayat election in 2019 under the new administrative set-up of the Union Territory of

Jammu and Kashmir. And then he won.

Talking exclusively to Kashmir Central, Farooq shares how he was taunted and ridiculed by his friends for jumping into the electoral fray. Seeing himself all alone, he decided not to buckle down and remained adamant to work for the welfare of his people.

Remembers he: "I decided to fight the elections against the wishes of my well-wishers. I'm a practising lawyer and was earning well. But the condition of my village did not allow us to live a life of dignity - with no potable water, improper drainage facilities and dilapidated roads and schools. In fact, my friends would taunt me for the condition of my village".

Farooq, in his 60s, was unaware what was in store for him. There was a tough job ahead but well, today, those who boycotted him then, are showering praises for his 'Give Plastic, Take Gold' campaign.

This initiative saw a huge response from his village people who participated enthusiastically to make it a

huge success. The initiative simply is - for every 20 quintals of polythene waste brought to the Panchayat, the village head offers one gold coin in return.

Farooq informs: "Actually, this initiative was the brainchild of my wife with whom I discussed this and she, without any hesitation, supported me and offered two of her gold coins. This is where my motivation came from and the campaign caught a pace thereafter".

Farooq is of the opinion that earlier, electoral politics was confined to just a few sections of the society, but with the implementation of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments, Jammu and Kashmir saw a new hope rise under the guidance of the central government. And then "there is no dearth of funds available in the UT exchequer. During the 'Back To Village' programme, I presented one hundred demands before the district administration and of those, 98 have already been met and two are in the pipeline and will be fulfilled soon," he informs.

In recognition of the exemplary work done by Farooq Ahmad, the Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor administration has felicitated him with a UT level prestigious award on the National Panchayat Day a few days back. Recognising his commitment towards the people of his Panchayat, the LG said he had personally got very inspired by the work of Farooq Ahmad





and wanted that his revolution reach every nook and corner of the UT and the entire country. He encouraged everyone to submit as much plastic waste to the Panchayat as possible to claim the gold incentive. And lo and behold, within a fortnight, the whole village was declared plastic-free. Now the District Administration, Anantnag, is planning to spread this initiative throughout the district.

Farooq informs they had planned to reward their people on April 30 for their enthusiastic participation but due to inclement weather, had to defer the award function to May 7.

With the success of his mission, Farooq Ahmad has decided to infuse more holistic and scientific techniques to segregate the solid waste at its source. Says he, "Collection of waste is the most crucial in order to preserve our environment and future generations. Later, techniques can be used for a scientific disposal. More than 40 villages

have started to replicate this idea in their panchayats".

Indeed, Farooq Ahmad is collecting praises galore for his tireless work to eradicate plastic. Social activist Dr. Raja Muzaffar, praising him, wrote: "Congratulations Advocate Farooq Ganai, Sarpanch, Sadiwara, Anantnag for being felicitated by LG Manoj Sinha ji today during National Panchayat Day. Your work on waste management is incredible.

This has to be made a people's movement".

Social worker and Democratic Azad Party State Secretary Tasleema Akhter congratulates him for his relentless work and describes him as a man with a vision and a mission.

Farooq has decided to fight elections yet again in the Panchayat polls this October to help his village tread further on the path of development.



CONNECTING WITH FARMERS

by **Mir Tanveer**

**The J&K government
launched the Kisan
Sampark Abhiyan in 3,565
panchayats on April 24**

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KASHMIR CENTRAL | 30 APRIL 2023

THE Jammu and Kashmir government, on April 24, launched the Kisan Sampark Abhiyan in 3,565 panchayats to educate farmers on various issues, including business management, entrepreneurship and government schemes.

The Kisan Sampark Abhiyan is a prestigious programme of the Agriculture Production Department, aimed at the overall welfare of farmers across the Union Territory.

This was announced by Additional Chief Secretary,





Agriculture Production Department, Atal Dulloo, during a high-level meeting he chaired to review the progress on preparations for the programme launch.

The abhiyan was launched across 3,565 panchayats in Jammu and Kashmir from April 24, and will last for four months. It aims to involve Panchayati Raj Institutions in the scheme and celebrate 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' as a part of the programme.

"Some 2,400 resource persons have been identified and trained for all districts, and 45 educational videos in multiple languages have been created to educate farmers to ensure the success of the ambitious programme. Also, pamphlets have been printed in Urdu, Hindi and English," said Dulloo. The abhiyan will include question and answer sessions for the farmers and they will receive education about 18 centrally-sponsored schemes that have been designed for their welfare and development.

Additionally, manual

passbooks under the Kisan Credit Card scheme will be replaced by smart cards for the farmers. This change is aimed at helping farmers increase their spending in the sector, ultimately leading to an improvement in their productivity and production, Dulloo added.

The Agriculture Production Department will launch Daksh Kisan, an online skilling platform that will provide farmers with learning opportunities, he added. "The platform will include 1,700 videos across 118 courses in Urdu, Hindi, Dogri and Kashmiri. The course material with 20,000 pages will cover several modules, including business management and entrepreneurship," Dulloo further informed.

Learners will be given certificates from SKUAST after the completion of the courses. The entire programme is free of cost, making it an unprecedented initiative for the farming community of Jammu and Kashmir, noted Dulloo.

The programme will also launch an IT platform, a one-stop dashboard to offer all farmers-related services and schemes of the government with a facility for online application and approval. The online system will also provide timely, sector-wise, region-wise and crop-wise advisories to registered farmers through SMS, irrespective of whether they have undergone any course or not, said Dulloo.

He encouraged officers to educate farmers about the programme and ensure their availability and increase the participation of Panchayati Raj Institution members.

Some of the farmers, sharing notes regarding the abhiyan, said these kind of initiatives brought awareness and a scientific approach among the farming community from rural areas, and who are dealing with allied sectors of agriculture. Such policies encourage farmers to develop interest in the farming sector, they felt.

Another officer working as a resource person for the programme said that the UT government's intention was to build policies and programmes to empower farmers and this programme was a part of that. "In this programme, we are able to get connected with our farmers at a local level and are able to guide them towards modern farming, different from the traditional approach. In these programmes, different segments of the agriculture sector are discussed with farmers for start-ups, for generating livelihood for

families and for the society as a whole. There is a lot of scope in this field for generating livelihood in Kashmir and providing a source of employment to the unemployed youth of Kashmir,” he said.

In this programme, different central government policies and schemes are discussed with farmers while availing of financial support for developing the economy. The government is making efforts in creating loan facilities easily available to the farmers without any obstacle or acquiring details from financial institutions or banks.

In Budgam district, Chairman, District Development Council (DDC) Nazir Ahmed Khan, along with Budgam ADDC Dr Akramullah Tak, presided over the Sampark programme at Panchayat Halqa Aripanthan in Beerwah Block.

During an interaction with the media, they said these kind



of initiatives, through local governing institutions of UT, bring administration at the doorsteps of people without any problems or difficulties. They said the community of farmers could turn out to be game changers in revolutionising the agricultural sector in the UT.

To reach people in the UT

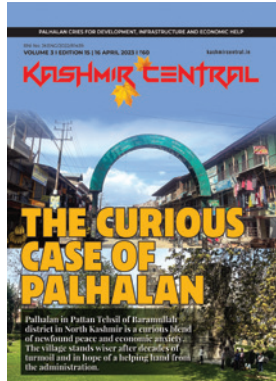
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