

Agripreneurship for Rural Youth

Shailaja Bajpai
The Vice President's address underscored a timely and urgent call to transform India's rural economy by harnessing the untapped potential of agricultural industries. His emphasis on training rural youth to become agripreneurs, rather than job-seekers migrating to urban centres, is not just a policy recommendation- it is a national imperative. India's agricultural sector supports over 60percent of its population but contributes only around 18percent to the GDP, reflecting a stark imbalance between population dependence and economic productivity. A primary reason is the lack of supportive structures for value addition, processing, and marketing of agricultural produce. By focusing on the development of small-scale associated agricultural industries-such as food processing units, cold storage facilities, logistics chains, and rural packaging hubs-the Government can create sustainable livelihood avenues and increase farm income multifold.

Agripreneurship is the key to unlocking the vast potential hidden in India's villages. Rather than viewing farming as a subsistence activity, it must be seen as a foundation for rural enterprises. Educated youth from farming families can lead this transformation by venturing into agro-based startups, supported by modern technology and Government assistance. Small-scale industries such as fruit and



vegetable processing, dairy product manufacturing, herbal and medicinal plant processing, and compost production not only help in value addition but also create local employment opportunities. A small tomato processing unit can produce ketchup, puree, and dried products, all of which have high market demand. Similarly, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, and floriculture require modest capital but yield significant returns.

The Vice President rightly highlighted the potential of artificial intelligence in transforming rural systems. AI is already making a substantial difference by enabling precision farming, predictive analytics for weather and crop yields, automated irrigation systems, and supply chain optimisation. AI-driven mobile apps now offer farmers real-time advice on crop selection,

pest management, and soil health, democratising access to information that was once limited to experts. For young entrepreneurs, AI tools can significantly lower the barrier to entry by providing insights into market trends, buyer preferences, and price forecasting. With digital literacy improving and smartphones becoming ubiquitous even in remote villages, the integration of AI in agribusinesses is both feasible and transformative.

The Government has already laid down a solid foundation through schemes like the Prime Minister's Kisan Samman Nidhi, Startup India, and various Agri-Clinics and Agri-Business Centres initiatives. What is needed now is a targeted policy approach to support small-scale value-addition enterprises. Direct subsidies should be aligned with credit facilities, skill

development programmes, and mentorship initiatives for aspiring agripreneurs. Schemes like the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund and Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises offer critical support, including credit-linked subsidies and technical assistance. The challenge, however, lies in awareness and access. Localised awareness drives, facilitated through Krishi Vigyan Kendras and Pan-chayat-level training programmes, must be stepped up to bridge this gap.

The perception of farmers as mere food producers (Annadata) must evolve to recognise them as wealth creators (Bhagya Vidhata). Rural youth should be encouraged to dream big-of becoming exporters, innovators, and industrialists-not merely as job applicants in cities. Universities, agricul-

tural institutes, and NGOs have a crucial role to play in fostering this mindset shift through entrepreneurship boot camps, success story showcases, and incubation support. Moreover, digital marketplaces and e-commerce platforms now allow even small-scale producers to directly connect with urban consumers, bypassing exploitative middlemen and ensuring fair prices. This has been exemplified by the success of Farmer Producer Organisations, which combine the bargaining power of many small farmers into a single strong entity. India stands at a crucial juncture where rural rejuvenation is no longer a choice but a necessity for inclusive growth. Empowering youth through agripreneurship can stem the tide of urban migration, reduce underemployment, and revive rural economies with dignity and purpose.

Tall claims by Education Dept annoying Dogras

Maj Gen SK Sharma, AVSM
In 2020, Govt of India came out with National Education Policy, popularly called NEP-2020, with the aim to make education easy, understandable and useful for the young toddlers. It is proved well beyond doubt that teaching in mother tongue helps students delve into conceptual understanding and strengthen memory retention. Accordingly, NEP lays ample thrust on the teaching in mother tongue at least in the primary classes. This will alsopromote the native languages which is a basic requirement for the global peace. As far J&K is concerned, main two languages viz. Dogri and Kashmiri have been included in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, thus giving these the national status. Both these languages were also included as the official languages of the UT of J&K in 2020.

But on ground, the orders of the Govt of India as well as J&K are not fully implemented by the Education Dept. They have neither made Dogri and Kashmiri languages as the compulsory subjects in the schools nor provisioned Dogri and Kashmiri qualified speaking teachers even at the primary level. Public feels that both these aspects have been neglected by the Education Dept. and they are taking these very casually. Some senior citizens also say that the education dept of the govt is defying these orders. As these orders were not implemented by the Education



Dept., a delegation of Senior Citizens SS Club, Chowadi, Jammu met Manoj Sinha, Lieutenant Governor J&K in Sep 2023 and gave him facts of the case. LG assured the delegation that the Govt will ensure implementation of NEP-2020, make Dogri compulsory in Jammu region as per NEP and also arrange suitable resources.Jammu dining guide

However, nothing seems to have happened on ground. The author met many senior officials of the Education Dept including Secretary to Govt. School Education Dept, Chairman Board of School Education (BOSE), Project Director Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, CEO Jammu district, ZEOs andPrincipals of many schools. They were explained each and every clause of the NEP as well as National Curriculum Frameworks NCF-2022 and NCF 2023. All the schools in Jammu blame BOSE and the Education dept. for not issu-

ing any order and some of them also say that the govt. is betraying Jammuites. However, earlier in 2017, Education Dept had ordered all the govt and private schools to teach Kashmiri, Dogri and Bodhi as a compulsory 6th subject in 9th and 10th classes in their respective regions. Order No. 333-Edu of 19.6.2017 and also 464-Edu of 2017 further stated that the implementation would begin from the 2018-10 session. But the vested interests got these orders scuttled and these never saw light of the day. To pursue this case, the author met Chairman BOSE twice and requested him to prepare State Curriculum Framework (SCF) in line with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2022, and NCF-2023) so that the mother tongue Dogri and Kashmiri are given official place in the syllabi and students are taught from class 1 onward. He was also provided with the suggestions for framing SCF in line

with NEP as it would act as a guide for schools to teach mother tongue Dogri/Kashmiri as a compulsory subject in the primary classes.Jammu dining guide The author took the liberty of meeting Rajeev R Bhatnagar, the then Advisor to LG and explained to him the laxity of the Education Dept in implementing NEP and requested to issue an executive order, to the Dept as well as the BOSE authorities to implement NEP so that mother tongue Dogri/Kashmiri is accorded due place in the syllabi.

Prompt action by the Govt was appreciated by the society and the author when within a few months the following three orders were issued: Govt order No. 227-JK-(Edu) of 2024 dated 17.5.2024, issued by School Education Dept constituting a committee under Project Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan for ensuring implementation of NEP-2020 at the school level. JKBOSE constituted a committee

for preparing State Curriculum Framework in line with NCF-2022.

Dept of School Education also agreed to author's request and replied him stating, "All students will learn at least three languages. Two languages will be native and third will be English". This letter was sent to JKBOSE also for including a native language in the school syllabi as a compulsory subject. Schooling session of 2024-25 passed without any action on ground. Session of current year also commenced in April 2025. But schools are still waiting for any direction from the govt. to teach the mother tongue Dogri/Kashmiri. This lackadaisical attitude is beyond comprehension of a common citizen and some senior citizens feel that it is a deliberate attempt to keep the children away from the Dogri language thus leading to eminent death of Dogra culture in another 40-50 years or so.

No end to uncertainty in Bangladesh

MUHAMMAD Yunus, the head of Bangladesh's interim government, has announced that the country will hold elections in the first half of April 2026. By making this announcement, the Nobel laureate and Grameen Bank founder has sought to silence critics and opponents who questioned how interim his administration really was and if he would ever let go of power.

The questions arose because the interim administration, set up in the days after the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina government, has not only been inept at restoring a measure of order in the country even after 10 months but has also appeared to be taking important policy decisions impacting the country's foreign policy and security. The Bangladesh Army, too, questioned the decisions, publicly airing discontent at not being consulted on the move to establish a "humanitarian corridor" from Bangladesh to the Rakhine state in Myanmar, apparently at the prodding of the United Nations. The army had also pressed for an "early and inclusive" election. Yunus tried an age-old gambit adopted by leaders who believe in their own indispensability. He threatened to resign, and, predictably, was persuaded to stay on.

The announcement of elections in April has hardly cleared the air of political uncertainty or suspicions about his intentions. For one, the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), the second largest political party in the country after the Awami League, has rejected the timeline, and reiterated its demand for elections before the end of this year. In this, it is on the same side as the army. In a volatile political atmosphere still charged with anger against the Hasina government, the BNP, harassed and suppressed for over a decade, is eyeing a big electoral comeback.

Yunus' justification for his reluctance to hold polls earlier than next year is that when he took office, he promised to do three things: carry out constitutional, electoral and other institutional reforms through a process of national consensus; provide justice for those who were killed in police firing during the student protests that eventually led to Hasina's exit; and conduct elections.

The argument is that making the much-needed corrections to a broken political, governance and judicial structure would ensure that the elections did not reproduce the kind of one-party rule and authoritarian slide witnessed during Hasina's three terms. The view in sections of Bangladesh is that had these reforms been carried out before the 2008 elections, the country would have been spared the political chaos and bloodshed. Yunus set up six commissions to study each aspect and suggest changes. These commissions have duly submitted their reports. Now, a "national consensus commission" of political parties' representatives is trying to forge an all-round agreement on the reforms. It is no surprise that the consensus is proving to be elusive.

The BNP, whose political instincts remain sharp despite a decade in the wilderness and its leader Khaleda Zia's long years in jail or home imprisonment, has said the holding of elections cannot be held ransom to the lack of consensus on the reforms. Aside from the BNP's own electoral calculations, the concern is that putting off the elections may worsen the chaotic conditions in the country, eventually making the holding of elections impossible. More pertinently, however, all the talk of reforms and consensus sounds hollow given that the Awami League has been banned, and thus cannot take part in the election. With Hasina and many leaders in her clique living in exile in Delhi, its cadres and supporters being targeted at home, and no effective second rung to speak of, the Awami League is in total disarray. Yunus may carry out all the reforms he wants, and may even take his time doing that. But any claim of corrections to Bangladesh's many problems will remain hollow, and their purpose defeated if the Awami League, hollowed out though it is, cannot take part in the elections. Banning the party and keeping it out of the elections can only widen the political and social faultlines. It is a sure path to the repetition of the many blunders committed by Hasina. Even the reforms themselves, ostensibly to be arrived at by a process of national consensus, would lack that very consensus as the Awami League is not a part of that process. Instead, what is apparent now is an attempt to airbrush the party of Bangladesh's liberation out of the nation's past, present and future.

On the other hand is the resurrection of the Jamaat-e-Islami, which collaborated with the Pakistan Army in the atrocities committed in the months before the country's liberation. The Jamaat was stripped of its registration as a political party and disallowed from participating in the 2013 elections after the Bangladesh Supreme Court under Hasina's watch ruled that the party's constitution went against the secular principles of the national constitution. Last month, Jamaat leader ATM Azharul Islam, who was tried and convicted as a collaborationist by the "International Criminal Court" set up by the Hasina government, was acquitted. While the trials of the Jamaat members were decreed at the time as partisan and dubious, and the judicial proceedings as a kangaroo court, the irony is hard to miss: an administration that says it wants to set Bangladesh on the right path is using the same court to try Hasina on charges of corruption and "crimes against humanity" . Her trial, whose outcome is pre-determined, will take place in absentia. India is unlikely to accede to Bangladesh's demand for her extradition. The issue will worsen relations between the two countries. The Awami League's only hope now is that the Bangladesh Army will press for and secure its inclusion. Meanwhile, the Jamaat, a former ally of the BNP, is now confident it can make greater electoral inroads than before, on its own. It is also keen on elections but wants time. Yunus' April timeline is close to the Jamaat's own demand that elections should be held in mid-2026, the time that it needs to strengthen its network on the ground. This is also why the party is pushing for local elections first.

As such, the transition to an elected government, whether it happens in April or earlier, is not going to bring political stability in Bangladesh. Sreeradha Datta, who teaches international relations at Jindal Global University, and follows developments in Bangladesh closely, told Frontline in an interview that stability will be elusive until the political culture of that country changes.

The silver lining is that there are people in Bangladesh who remember the liberation story only too well. The home of Awami League founder and father of the nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman can be vandalised and burnt, and his face erased from currency notes. But it is more difficult to erase the memories of killings and rapes following Bangladesh's March 1971 declaration of independence. This is why the apology proffered by Jamaat chief Shafiqur Rahman for "past actions" of "party members" is inadequate. This is also why Pakistan's aim to "normalise" relations with Bangladesh will remain a pipe dream. Bangladesh's interim government, led by Muhammad Yunus, has announced that the country's next general elections will be held in the first half of April 2026, ending months of speculation over the timeline for restoring an elected government. The announcement comes amid mounting criticism from political parties and sections of civil society over delays in the democratic transition following the ouster of the Sheikh Hasina government.

However, the proposed election schedule has failed to ease political tensions. The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has rejected the timeline, demanding polls before the end of 2025, while concerns persist over the exclusion of the Awami League from the political process. Analysts argue that an election without the participation of one of Bangladesh's principal political parties could undermine the credibility and inclusiveness of the democratic process.

Jitendra Singh leaves for France to Lead high-level Indian Delegation at the International Meet on Oceans

New Delhi, July 10 (GNS): Union Minister of Earth Sciences (Independent Charge) Dr Jitendra Singh today left for France to lead a high-level Indian delegation at the International Meet on Oceans. Scheduled to be held at the French picturesque coastal city of Nice, the “United Nations Ocean Conference” (UNOC3) is taking place from June 8 to 13.

The high-level international gathering will bring together leaders, scientists, policymakers, and civil society actors from across the globe to discuss sustainable ocean governance and concrete actions for the health of the world's oceans.

Earth Sciences Minister's visit to France marks a significant step by the Govt of India as it would reiterate Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to India's global engagement on ocean sustainability and marine cooperation. Over the next four days, he will



participate in bilateral meetings with Ministers from key partner countries, deliver India's national statement at the UNOC plenary and engage in crucial policy dialogues on ocean action.

Among the key highlights of his schedule is the India-Norway side event on Marine Spatial Planning aboard the Norwegian research vessel S/S Statsraad Lehmkuhl at Monaco Harbour on June 8. Co-hosted with Norway's Minister of International Development, H.E. Åsmund Grøver Aukrust, the event will showcase the outcomes

of the India-Norway collaboration on sustainable marine governance. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Haakon of Norway is expected to grace the event as Guest of Honour. In addition to the formal sessions of the Conference, Dr. Jitendra Singh is slated to hold bilateral meetings with representatives from France, Germany, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Chile, among others. These meetings are expected to strengthen India's cooperation with key global players on issues ranging from marine pollution to ocean science and financing for blue

economy initiatives.

The third edition of the UN Ocean Conference — co-hosted by France and Costa Rica — will focus on key themes such as restoring marine ecosystems, reducing marine pollution, promoting ocean-based scientific cooperation, and mobilizing resources for the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 14. The conference will feature “Ocean Action Panels” involving governments, UN bodies, researchers, industry

leaders, and NGOs to forge partnerships and propose practical, scalable solutions.

India has actively contributed to the build-up to UNOC3. In the lead-up to the conference, the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) organized two Blue Talks in collaboration with the Embassies of France and Costa Rica in New Delhi. These sessions brought together scientists, officials, and stakeholders from multiple sectors to share best practices and develop concrete recommendations on marine governance and conservation. During the general debate at UNOC3, Dr. Jitendra Singh will articulate India's stance on ocean policy, highlighting the country's initiatives in marine research, coastal resilience, and regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. India has also sought speaking slots in critical thematic panels, including those on marine pollution and scientific cooperation.

Shipping Connects Humanity and Its Aspirations: Sonowal

New Delhi, July 10 (GNS): The Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal, interacted with students of the prestigious Blue MBA Executive Programme at the Copenhagen Business School (CBS), today. The session spotlighted India's robust economic trajectory, expanding investment opportunities, and the country's efforts to harmonise economic growth with ecological responsibility. Shri Sonowal also became the first Minister from India to visit the prestigious business school.

The Minister was joined by a distinguished panel of faculty and maritime experts, including Brian Wessel, Director General of the Danish Maritime Authority; Leif Christensen, Associate Dean, Copenhagen Business School; and Irene Rosberg, Programme Director of the Blue MBA. The Union Minister was accompanied by Manish Prabhat, Ambassador of India to Denmark.

Speaking to the Blue MBA cohort, Minister Shri Sonowal outlined India's maritime growth strategy driven by the Sagarmala Programme



in the years ahead and I am eager to interact with you all today and learn more about your experiences, insights, and aspirations. India and Denmark have enjoyed a long and constructive relationship, and our maritime partnership is growing from strength to strength. As coastal nations with rich maritime traditions and deep strategic interests in ocean-based industries, our collaboration today carries great potential—not just for our two countries, but for global maritime sustainability. India's economic

by the country's focus on developing green ports, multimodal connectivity, and digital infrastructure to boost international trade.

“Today, India represents a compelling story of growth that is inclusive, innovative, and sustainable,” said Union Minister Shri Sarbananda Sonowal during the interactive session. “As we expand our port capacity and integrate logistics across the hinterland, we also remain deeply committed to decarbonising the maritime sector. The aim is to make India the global epicentre for green

Union Health Minister reaffirms commitment towards this year's World Food Safety Day theme “Food Safety: Science in Action”

New Delhi, July 10 (GNS): On the occasion of World Food Safety Day 2025, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda, delivered the keynote address at a special programme themed “Stop Obesity by Eating Safe and Healthy” at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences (NIMHANS), Bengaluru, today. Organized by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, the programme focused on the critical role of food safety and nutrition in preventing non-communicable diseases such as obesity, echoing Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's call to promote preventive health through traditional and wholesome dietary practices.

Minister of Medical Education and Skill Development Department, Government of Karnataka, Dr. Sharanprakash R Patil, Members of Parlia-



ment, Shri Lahar Singh Siroya and Shri P C Mohan, Union Health Secretary, Ms. Punya Salila Srivastava and senior officers of the Government of India also attended the event.

In his keynote address, Shri Nadda reiterated the Prime Minister's emphasis on preventing obesity and prioritizing wellness. Emphasizing the urgent need to address the rising burden of obesity and non-communicable diseases, Shri Nadda stated that “the awareness initiative to

stop obesity is a timely step towards educating people about the health risks of poor dietary habits and encouraging them to embrace balanced, nutritious food” and underlined that “for a Viksit Bharat, a healthy India is necessary and that can be ensured through the right types of food, healthy food habits and healthy lifestyle.”

The Union Health Minister underlined the importance of safe, healthy and nutritious food along with the benefits

of a balanced diet that can ensure increased immunity. Shri Nadda reaffirmed the commitment towards this year's World Food Safety Day theme i.e. “Food Safety: Science in Action”. Recognizing the alarming trend of rising obesity, citing the ICMR-India Diabetes (INDIAB) study, Shri Nadda stated that “from 2008 to 2020, obesity in urban, India has increased by 39.6%, while it has increased 23.1% in rural areas.” He also cited another study that projects

that by 2050, 1/3 population of the country will be obese.

Underlining the challenge of unhealthy foods and dietary habits, especially in urban areas, Shri Nadda stressed that children are the most vulnerable group when it comes to adulterated foods as they are attracted towards unhealthy foods and their advertisements. To meet this challenge, he called for ensuring awareness at a young age that will bring forth better impact. Highlighting the negative impact of ultra processed foods on health, Shri Nadda urged all to be careful of their food habits and adhere to nutritious food that brings healthy changes to one's mind and body.

He further added that “eating right is a right that one must exercise. Eating right and ensuring awareness about it, is a collective responsibility of the government, industry, academia and individuals.”



and the Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047, both aimed at creating sustainable infrastructure, multimodal logistics, and a future-ready maritime ecosystem. Shri Sarbananda Sonowal said, “CBS is a globally respected institution, and the Blue MBA programme in particular stands as a beacon for future-ready leadership in the maritime world. I am especially pleased to be among students whose drive and vision will help shape the course of global shipping

rise—as the fourth largest economy—offers immense opportunities for maritime businesses, both domestic and international. Sustainability is at the heart of our maritime policy, and we are committed to achieving Net Zero emissions at major ports by 2047. From green hydrogen to digital shipping, our roadmap is ambitious yet inclusive.”

The discussion delved into India's role as a global maritime hub and emerging logistics power, underpinned

shipping and clean trade corridors.” The Blue MBA cohort includes senior professionals and alumni from global maritime and logistics leaders such as Noble Corporation, MAN Energy Solutions, American Bureau of Shipping, and Bureau Veritas. Their interaction with the Minister focused on the investment landscape in Indian maritime infrastructure, upcoming public-private partnership opportunities, and India's policy incentives for green shipping.

Need for institutionalized hybrid data ecosystem which has equal place for traditional & alternate data sources: Prof. Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, DST

New Delhi, July 10 (GNS): The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), in collaboration with NITI Aayog and the World Bank as knowledge partner, conducted a two-day National Workshop on ‘Using Alternate Data Sources and Frontier Technologies for Policy Making’ at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi during 5-6 June, 2025.

The National Workshop concluded with a Valedictory Session on 6 June, 2025. The Valedictory Session was graced by Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) to GoI as the Chief Guest; Prof. Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, D/o Science and Technology; Dr. Saurabh Garg, Secretary, MoSPI and Shri P.R. Meshram, Director General, MoSPI. The two-day workshop was attended by over 450 participants from central ministries, state governments, international organisations including the World Bank, academic and research institutions, and

private sector entities.

In his address, Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor to GoI and the Chief Guest of the event emphasized that alternate data sources and frontier technologies are increasingly becoming critical for policy making. These high frequency indicators are more dynamic and offer timely insights, enabling policies to be more agile and responsive. While traditional data sources reflect where we have been, the alternate data sources indicate where we are heading. He added that though alternate data sources provide real time information at a much granular level, they cannot replace tradition data sources. He emphasized the need for the best policy which blends both traditional and alternative data sources. He highlighted various use-cases where alternate data sources have been effectively used. He stressed on the need for collaboration between Government, aca-



demia, researchers, industry and international organizations for effective use of new technologies. He also called for ethical deployment of AI and said that data security and privacy concerns cannot be compromised. Further, he asserted that the development of techno-legal framework for Digital Public Infrastructure is a gift of India to

the World.

Prof. Abhay Karandikar, Secretary, D/o Science and Technology in his address remarked that the policy making process is a complex exercise which involve gathering of data, consultation with stakeholders and drawing insights. AI/ML has facilitated timely processing of data for designing action-

able policies. In this age and time, challenge is not to collect data but how to make sense of the data. The real challenge lies in addressing issues relating to data privacy, data security, regulatory framework, and institutional readiness. He emphasized on the need for institutionalized hybrid data ecosystem which has equal place for both tra-

ditional and alternate data sources.

Dr. Saurabh Garg, Secretary, MoSPI, in his address emphasized on the need of fostering collaboration with various stakeholders for developing a robust statistical system to address the data needs for policy making. He opined that as survey data becomes available

with a time lag; alternate data sources can be used to supplement traditional data sources for policy making in real time. While quoting the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, he emphasized that for statistical purposes best combination of the four data sources, namely surveys, censuses, administrative records and alternate data sources may be drawn with quality and timeliness along with limiting cost and respondent burden. He expected that in next 3-6 months, MoSPI will be able to implement some of the use cases that have been identified to harness alternate data sources and the application of frontier technologies. He thanked World Bank for conceptualizing and NITI Aayog for collaborating with MoSPI in organizing this workshop and expressed that India will be at the forefront of integrating alternate data sources and frontier technologies in the National Statistical

Frameworks.

In the welcome address, Shri P.R. Meshram, Director General (Data Governance) expressed gratitude to NITI Aayog, World Bank, and other participants for their active involvement during the course of two-days event. He added that the workshop has not only deepened our understanding of the challenges in integration of alternate data sources in the statistical system of the country, but also helped charting out the solutions to the challenges. The key highlights of the four technical sessions on the subjects, viz, AI and Data Science for Official Statistics; Mobile Phone Data for Tourism Statistics; Geo-spatial Data for Sampling, Ocean Accounting and Data Dissemination and Scanner data for CPI compilation held during Workshop were also discussed during the valedictory session along with key takeaways. Some of the salient points of the technical sessions are as under.

Revanth Reddy to release final Rythu Bharosa installment

Distribute e-pattadar passbooks at Khammam farmers' meet



Hyderabad, July 10 (GNS): Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy will attend the Rythu Ashirvada Sabha at Jagannadhapuram in Chintakani Mandal of Khammam district on Friday, where he will release the final installment of Rythu Bharosa assistance for the Vanakalam (Kharif) season and distribute e-Pattadar passbooks to farmers.

The programme, being organised under the leadership of Deputy Chief

Minister Bhatti Vikramarka in the Madhira Assembly constituency, is scheduled to begin on Friday evening. State Ministers Tummala Nageswara Rao, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, Vakiti Srihari and Ponnam Prabhakar will also participate in the farmers' meeting.

The Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister had launched the disbursement of Vanakalam Rythu Bharosa funds from Shilpakala Vedika in Hyderabad on June 30. Since then, the

government has released Rs 9,000 crore under the scheme, with the amount credited to farmers' bank accounts within nine days.

In addition to releasing the final instalment of financial assistance, the Chief Minister will hand over e-Pattadar passbooks to eligible farmers during the programme.

Meanwhile, traffic restrictions have been imposed on the Khammam-Bonakal route in view of the Chief Minister's visit.

Telangana launches mega oil palm plantation drive in Jangaon

Jangaon, July 10 (GNS): Telangana Ministers Dr G Vivek Venkataswamy and Ponnam Prabhakar on Friday launched a mega oil palm plantation programme in Jangaon village of Akkanapet mandal in Husnabad Assembly constituency, reaffirming the government's commitment to promote oil palm cultivation as a profitable alternative crop. The ministers planted oil palm saplings and felicitated farmer Sampath for successfully cultivating the crop.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Vivek said the government has set a target of bringing 50,000 acres under oil palm cultivation in the region. He said around 14,000 acres have already been brought under cultivation in the district. He said the government would provide subsidies to farmers cultivating oil palm for four years and stressed the need to expand domestic produc-



tion to reduce dependence on edible oil imports. Referring to global geopolitical developments, including the conflict involving Iran, the minister said fluctuations in international markets have underscored the importance of increasing indigenous edible oil production.

He said oil palm cultivation does not require excessive quantities of water and offers substantial returns after four years. The presence of an oil palm processing factory near Husnabad would further benefit growers by ensuring market access, he added. Calling for

greater awareness among farmers, Dr Vivek urged public representatives and officials to educate villagers on the economic benefits of oil palm cultivation.

Announcing an incentive to encourage large-scale cultivation, the minister said that if Minister Ponnam Prabhakar provides Rs 5 lakh to villages bringing 100 acres under oil palm cultivation, he would also contribute Rs 5 lakh in his capacity as the district in-charge minister.

He also said farmers in Chennur were showing increasing interest in taking up oil palm cultivation.

Congress to act on internal issues after fact-finding, says Mahesh Kumar Goud

Hyderabad, July 10 (GNS): Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) President Mahesh Kumar Goud on Friday said the party would address its internal issues after a fact-finding exercise by senior leaders, while launching a sharp attack on the BRS and BJP over governance, corruption and unfulfilled promises.

Speaking to reporters at Gandhi Bhavan, Goud said there were only minor issues within the Congress and expressed confidence that they would be resolved soon. He said the party's disciplinary committee would act impartially and that some MLAs had extended support to the Congress in the interest of protecting democracy.



Referring to issues involving Kadiyam Srihari, Minister Konda Surekha, and the Tungaturthi constituency, he said senior Congress leaders Sachin Sawant and T Jagga Reddy had been appointed as observers to ascertain the facts. Appropriate action would be taken after they submit their report, he added. Targeting BRS

leader T Harish Rao, Goud questioned his performance during his decade-long tenure as a minister and asked why he should be given "another three months." He also alleged that a project executed during the previous BRS government had collapsed and sought an explanation from Harish Rao.

On speculation over

Harish Rao joining the Congress, Goud said any such proposal would be discussed by the party's Political Affairs Committee before a decision is taken.

The TPCC chief also accused the BRS of failing to deliver benefits to the common people during its 10-year rule and alleged there was substance in BRS MLC K Kavitha's allegations regarding the finances of the party. He questioned how a regional party had accumulated Rs 1,400 crore and said the issue warranted scrutiny. Criticising BJP leader Etela Rajender, Goud alleged that he remained silent while serving as Finance Minister during the BRS regime when, according to him, public funds were misused, and the state's water re-

sources were "plundered." He further alleged that Etela's recent statements appeared to support the BRS. Taking a swipe at the BJP leadership, Goud said it did not matter whether union Minister J P Nadda or any other BJP leader visited Telangana, asserting that the party must first explain what happened to its promise of creating two crore jobs. He said people had seen the BJP's governance over the past 12 years and would not be misled. Goud also announced that the Congress would hold consultations with AICC Telangana-in-charge Meenakshi Natarajan and Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy on July 15 to take a decision on appointments to various corporation posts.

Owaisi meets Telangana Chief Secretary, demands PRCs for voters

Hyderabad, July 10 (GNS): AIMIM president and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Friday, July 10, urged the Telangana government to issue Permanent Residence Certificates (PRCs) to eligible residents to help them establish their identity during the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls.

Owaisi met Telangana Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju and submitted a representation seeking the issuance of PRCs or Family Register Certificates to electors in the state. He was accompanied by the chairman and vice-chairman of the Telangana Minorities Residential Educational Institutions Society. The AIMIM chief requested the state government, led by chief minister A Revanth Reddy, to exercise its executive powers under Article 162 of the Constitution to issue the certificates. He argued that such a measure would help genuine voters who lack the documents required during the SIR process.

Referring to neighbouring Karnataka, Owaisi said the Congress government there issues Permanent Residence Certificates under the Karnataka Sakala Services Act, 2011, and urged Telangana to adopt a similar mechanism. In a



post on X, Owaisi said, " If Revanth Reddy accepts, it will be beneficial to poor people of Telangana in getting their names in the Final SIR list, which will save them many troubles and inconvenience."

The latest representation comes days after Owaisi publicly demanded that the Telangana government introduce Permanent Residence Certificates to ensure that eligible voters are not excluded from the electoral rolls during the ongoing revision exercise.

Earlier this week, he said he had been unable to secure an appointment with Chief Minister Revanth Reddy but had discussed the issue with Deputy Chief Minister Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka. Owaisi suggested that PRCs could be issued based on the presence of a person's parents' or grandparents' names in electoral

rolls or through supporting documents such as Aadhaar, Public Distribution System (PDS) ration cards and school records.

The Hyderabad MP claimed that around 50 people have been approaching AIMIM every day over the past two months, stating that they do not possess the documents sought during the SIR exercise.

While stressing that duplicate entries, deceased voters and other ineligible names should be removed from the electoral rolls, he said genuine voters should not be disenfranchised because they are unable to produce documentary proof. Owaisi also criticised the ruling Congress, saying it was out of touch with the realities faced by poor people if it failed to recognise that many residents do not possess all the required documents.

Foundation laid for Rs 47 crore fish export hub near Hyderabad

Hyderabad, July 10 (GNS): Telangana's Minister for Animal Husbandry, Dairy Development and Fisheries, Vakiti Srihari, on Friday laid the foundation for a freshwater fish export centre at Koheda in Rangareddy district and said the facility will increase fishermen's income, providing them with permanent employment, and creating opportunities for international markets.

He said that it is a matter of pride for Telangana that, for the first time in the country, such a modern export centre is being established in an inland state, not in the coastal region.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, with 60 per cent funding from the central government and 40 per cent from the state government, this centre is being constructed at a cost of approximately Rs 47 crore.

This centre will be equipped with all modern facilities such as modern cold storage units, purification units, packaging centres, training centre, customs facilities, and a large wholesale market.

With this export centre, domestic and international markets will be available for the fish produced in the state, and fishermen will

receive better prices. Telangana fish will gain special recognition worldwide, he said. Around 2,000 traders will have the opportunity to conduct business here, while approximately 5,000 people will get direct and indirect employment opportunities in sectors like loading, unloading, packaging, transportation, and others.

This project will not only serve as a fish market but also stand as a platform for development that connects Telangana's fisheries sector with the world market. Along with strengthening the rural economy, it will create new employment opportunities for the youth. The minister stated that Telangana is currently continuing to hold the top position in the country in freshwater fish production. In 2025, the state recorded production of approximately 4.20 lakh tonnes of fish and 15,000 tonnes of freshwater prawns.

He expressed his gratitude to the central government, state government, people's representatives, officials, and fishermen's associations who cooperated on this prestigious project. "Our goal is to provide a world market for every fish produced in Telangana.

Telangana Chief Secretary reviews key industrial infrastructure projects

Hyderabad, July 10 (GNS): Telangana Chief Secretary Sanjay Jaju on Friday reviewed the progress of major industrial infrastructure projects in the state and directed officials to expedite their implementation to attract investments and generate large-scale employment opportunities.

Chairing a review meeting with senior officials of the Industries and Commerce Department at the Secretariat, Jaju assessed the status of key projects being executed by the Telangana Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (TGIIC), including Bharat Future City, Zaheerabad Industrial City, Kakatiya Mega Textile Park and other strategic industrial infrastructure



initiatives. TGIIC Managing Director Shashanka briefed the Chief Secretary on the progress of the projects, infrastructure development, investment prospects and timelines for completion.

Jaju stressed that the department's primary objective should be to position Telangana as a preferred investment destination by providing world-class infrastructure and a business-

friendly ecosystem.

He said attracting domestic and global investments was essential for sustaining the state's economic growth and creating employment opportunities for the youth.

The Chief Secretary directed officials to ensure close coordination among all departments and implementing agencies for the timely execution of industrial projects. He also asked

them to regularly monitor project progress, identify bottlenecks at an early stage and resolve them through effective inter-departmental coordination.

Observing that flagship projects such as Bharat Future City, Zaheerabad Industrial City and Kakatiya Mega Textile Park have the potential to transform Telangana's industrial landscape, Jaju said these initiatives would attract significant investments and promote balanced regional development. He instructed officials to adopt a proactive approach in providing infrastructure and investor facilitation services to ensure the successful implementation of the projects.



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