

Minister Javid Ahmad Dar Inaugurates Annual Zonal Workshop of Krishi Vigyan Kendras at
SKUAST-Jammu

Climate Change Poses Major Threat to Agriculture Sector: Minister Dar

JAMMU, DECEMBER 22: The Annual Zonal Workshop of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) of ICAR–ATARI, Zone-I for the year 2024–25 was inaugurated today at the Baba Jitto Auditorium, Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-J), Chatha. The workshop was inaugurated by Javid Ahmad Dar Minister for Agriculture Production Department, Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Departments, who was the Chief Guest on the occasion. The three-day workshop (December 22–24) has brought together key stakeholders of agricultural research and extension from across northern India to review performance, share best practices and chart future strategies for strengthening farmer-centric extension services. The inaugural function was held in the august presence of Dr. Rajbir Singh, Deputy Director General (Agricultural Extension), ICAR, New Delhi, as Guest of Honour; Prof. B. N. Tripathi, Vice-Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu; Dr. Parvender Sheoran, Director, ICAR-ATARI, Ludhiana; and statutory officers of the University.

Welcoming the dignitaries and participants, Dr. Amrish Vaid, Director Extension, SKUAST-Jammu and Convener of the Workshop, highlighted the pivotal role of KVKs as frontline extension institutions and emphasized the importance of convergence between research, extension and development departments for effective technology dissemination and farmer empowerment.

In his inaugural address, Javid Ahmad Dar lauded the contribution of KVKs in transforming agriculture at the grassroots level. He stressed the need to strengthen farmer-centric extension services, promote diversification, value addition and agri-entrepreneurship, and ensure timely dissemination of scientific innovations to farmers. He also appreciated the role of SKUAST-Jammu and ICAR-ATARI in fostering sustainable and inclusive agricultural development in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The Minister further stressed that climate change poses a major threat to the agriculture sector, affecting crop productivity, water resources and farmers' livelihoods. He emphasized the urgent need to educate and sensitize farmers about climate-related challenges and equip them with knowledge and skills to adopt climate-resilient agricultural practices. The Minister underscored that awareness, capacity building and timely advisory services through institutions like Krishi Vigyan Kendras are essential to help farmers adapt to changing climatic conditions and ensure sustainable agricultural growth.

Addressing the gathering as Guest of Honour, Dr. Rajbir Singh highlighted the evolving role of KVKs in promoting climate-resilient agriculture, agri-entrepreneurship, digital extension and skill development. He underscored the importance of outcome-oriented extension approaches and accountability mechanisms for achieving sustainable agricultural growth.

In his presidential address, Vice-Chancellor Prof. B. N. Tripathi stated that SKUAST-Jammu has been consistently strengthening research–extension linkages through frontline demonstrations, on-farm trials and diagnostic services. He informed that the University has significantly expanded its national and international collaborations through MoUs and has recorded a steady increase in its Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) portfolio over the past three years, reflecting a strong emphasis on innovation and technology commercialization. He also

highlighted the University's active role in flagship programmes such as HADP and JKCIP, particularly in agri-niche crops, horticulture promotion, startup development and handholding of Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs).

Outlining the objectives of the workshop, Dr. Parvender Sheoran stated that ICAR-ATARI, Ludhiana coordinates and supports 72 Krishi Vigyan Kendras across Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. He noted that the Annual Zonal Workshop serves as a crucial platform for performance review, experience sharing and finalization of action plans aligned with national agricultural priorities.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. S. K. Gupta, Director Research, SKUAST-Jammu, emphasized the need for strong integration between research and extension to address location-specific agricultural challenges, adding that farmer-centric and problem-oriented research guided by KVK feedback is essential for enhancing technology adoption.

During the inaugural function, seven publications were released and five FPOs/entrepreneurs/SHGs were felicitated for their exemplary contributions to agricultural development. The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Anil Kumar, Registrar, SKUAST-Jammu. . Proceedings of the programme were conducted by Dr. Sachin Gupta and Dr. Pawan Sharma.

The workshop is being attended by Directors of Extension of State Agricultural Universities, Programme Coordinators of KVKs, scientists and extension professionals from Zone-I states and Union Territories. Deliberations during the three-day event will focus on reviewing KVK performance, approving action plans for the coming year and formulating region-specific strategies to strengthen agricultural extension and improve farmer livelihoods.