

**'Awaam Ki Awaaz'****Focus on time tested traditional methods of water management: LG***Excelsior Correspondent*

SRINAGAR, May 15: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha dedicated the 14th Edition of the 'Awaam Ki Awaaz' programme to all those Citizens and Panchayats of J&K which have stepped forward with a strong resolve for the revival of Traditional Water Bodies.

The radio programme was aired today on all local and primary channels of All India Radio (AIR) in the UT and broadcast on DD Kashmir.

Every person is the custodian of the Earth & its resources and the efforts being made by them will prove helpful in balancing both Economic Development and Environment, the Lt Governor observed in his opening remarks.

"Traditional ponds and water sources sustain life. Civilisations and Economies have prospered around water sources. In our quest to revive traditional water bodies, the Panchayats of district Doda, Samba, Bandipora, Budgam, Kathua and Ramban, besides a large number of conscious citizens from all walks of life have come forward and shown a strong resolve", the Lt Governor said.

Noting that for the past few years, the effects of climate change have been visible all over the world, the Lt Governor said that Climate change is reminding us to respect and restore the delicate balance of nature and strive for optimal utilization of the existing water resources.

Emphasizing on fixing the responsibility of keeping water bodies safe and clean in every panchayat, the Lt Governor called upon all sections of the society to actively participate to protect ecology during this challenging time.

Ponds and water bodies are like family members, and with this belief and tradition we can build a secure future for the young generations. The concerned authorities must focus on time-tested traditional methods of water management, he added.

In the spirit of Jan-Bhagidari, efforts need to be made from all corners to revive water bodies in Jammu and Kashmir and reduce the impact of the catastrophic climate change which is affecting health, ecology, agriculture and water supply in the UT, the Lt Governor said.

The Lt Governor noted that the commitment and determination of the public representatives

of Local bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions have resulted in the revival of pond of Mohalla Saran Singh of Jakhole town in Kathua district that had become a victim of encroachment 52 years ago. In Kathua district alone, 152 ponds have come alive again in the last one year with the collective efforts of various departments of administration and public representatives, he added.



Anantnag has been known for its water springs for centuries. But, unfortunately, these important sources of freshwater had become non-living. In the last one year, the Panchayati Raj Institutions together with local administration have revived 12 freshwater springs.

In Ramban district, 70 water bodies have been revived within a year. Panchayats of Doda district have revived 71 water bodies. The work of reviving 316 ponds and wells of different panchayats of Jammu district has also been done.

In Samba district, with the combined efforts of the Rural Development Department and the Panchayats, 148 water bodies have been revived, including some very old ponds which had become lifeless due to encroachment. 12 Panchayats of Bandipora have formed committees and done important work to revive the dying water springs there. Bandipora District Administration has also removed 114 encroachments from Jhelum River.

A total of 186 water springs and other water bodies have been revived in Budgam with the help of citizens and public representatives of the Panchayat, the Lt Governor added.

On the occasion, the Lt Governor appreciated the citizens namely- Mohammad Ashraf of Chandrakot Panchayat, Charan Singh of Dandrath village, Suraj Singh of Gam Panchayat, Manira Begum of Dharam Panchayat, Mohammad Iqbal Hajam of Shrichi Panchayat, for their contribution in reviving the water bodies that have been neglected for a long time.

He also congratulated Javed Ahmed Shah of Kultreh

Panchayat of Budgam district, for making tireless efforts for the revival of Astan Springs.

Referring to a suggestion received from Mushtaq Ahmad Sheikh from Anantnag regarding the cooperation of the local population for the revival and preservation of the water bodies present in residential areas, the Lt Governor said that the J&K administration had constituted water committees in all the Panchayats last year for the revival of water bodies, besides checking illegal construction and encroachment.

Responding to the suggestion of Ashish Kumar of Kathua and Rohit Sangra of Jammu for the compulsory online registration of all the consumers with the Jal Shakti department, the Lt Governor said that this insight will help in preparing a database of the consumers and streamline the processes associated with the digitization of citizen-oriented services.

The Lt Governor shared a letter received from Iqbal Sham-ul-Haq from Rajouri highlighting the need to rekindle the interest of the young generation and spread awareness about the rich history and culture of J&K.

The Lt Governor also mentioned about the suggestion of Pooja Sharma Raina from Jammu calling for making regular field trips part and parcel of the school curriculum, with an aim to boost interactions and learning from the experience on the ground.

While responding to the suggestion received from Pulwama's Naveed Hamid on creating a vibrant ecosystem of Start-Ups in J&K in line with the vision of the administration to strengthen entrepreneurship by means of promoting Innovation, Invention and Incubation, the Lt Governor said that the UT administration is building an enabling environment for start-ups to flourish in J&K.

In view of the suggestion of Shabir Malik from Baramulla to deal with the plastic menace, the Lt Governor requested all the citizens and the business community to adopt a better alternative to plastic bags and complement government efforts to make J&K - 'Polythene Free'.

Referring to a suggestion of Suhaib Afzal from Anantnag on raising the awareness regarding self-medication and the need to regulate the sale of the over-the-counter drugs, the Lt Governor said that under the leadership of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji, the first such policy has been formulated in the country which will regulate the sale of over-the-counter drugs.

**4 JKAS officers transferred***Excelsior Correspondent*