

## Apples & Saffron from Kashmir reach Oman

The fragrance and taste of world famous Kashmiri apples and saffron reached Oman thanks to the dedicated efforts of government to support local farmers. The availability of Kashmiri apples and saffron in Lulu stores across Oman, attests to the success of government efforts and is a glowing example of public private partnership. A special event was organized in November 2019 to celebrate and promote the availability of Kashmiri apples in Oman.



A dedicated scheme was conceptualized and implemented for the procurement of Kashmiri apples by the government. In less than 5 months, till the end of January this year, more than 15,000 metric tonnes of apples valued over INR 70 crores (about USD 10 million) were directly purchased from farmers in the Kashmir valley. In another move which added both glow and pride to the Indian tri-colour, the Kashmiri saffron, grown at an altitude between 1600 and 1800 meters, was given the Geographical Indication tag.

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has witnessed significant development in last one year and the true potential of the northern most regions of India is finding expression in the form of unprecedented progress in every sphere of human activity. External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar tweeted recently and stated, "A transformation underway in Jammu & Kashmir and in Ladakh - Application of progressive laws, Delivery of social justice, Advancement of women's

rights and empowerment, Support for vulnerable sections, Expansion of education and employment opportunities, Development projects taking shape on the ground”.

Rapid development of the region’s economy and improvement in the quality of lives of the common people are among the most significant achievements in the past year. J&K government organized the first ever pre-summit meet of a global international summit, during which the policy and regulatory framework and investment opportunities in 14 focused sectors were highlighted. As a result of this and with the help of road shows organized across India, nearly 170 Memorandums of Understanding worth INR 13,600 crore (about US Dollar 1.9 billion) were finalized.

A unique programme launched in November last year called “back to village” ensured that Government officers reached out to the farthest parts of J&K and spent two days and one night to study the development requirements. As a result, more than 20,000 development works were identified by the people. Of these, more than one-third (7000) have already been executed. Modernization of urban and rural infrastructure, universalisation of electricity access and robust projects for dealing with flood mitigation has been carried forward. The first ever winter games of the country were conducted in Jammu & Kashmir this past year.



Looking further into the future, two IT parks-one each in Jammu & Srinagar – are in the pipeline. On the educational front, in what is considered the largest addition in seven decades, 50 new institutions with 25,000 vacancies have been established. New health infrastructure worth INR 7,500 crore (over USD 1 billion) – that includes two new All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (Vijaypur in Jammu

and Awantipora in Kashmir), seven new medical colleges, five new nursing colleges and a state cancer institute are planned.

Another area of remarkable achievement is infrastructure development. Bottlenecks for projects spanning various sectors under the Prime Minister's development package have been removed. With 190 projects worth INR 7000 (USD 1 billion) crores aim to develop Jammu & Srinagar as modern, sustainable and smart cities with facilities such as Light Rail Transit System, which will be complemented by housing, slum development rehabilitation and township policies. Jammu & Kashmir has completed the first phase of launch of one nation one ration card scheme.

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### #NewVision for Development

Accelerating Development, Promoting Growth

- Rambagh Flyover** completed
- Jhelum Flood Mitigation Project** (Phase I) completed
- IIT Jammu** starts functioning from own campus
- Work on **AIIMS Jammu** started
- Ring Road** Jammu to be completed next year
- All contracts of **Pakal Dul project awarded** - work started

No wonder the Jammu & Kashmir has notched up a number of achievements in an enabling environment. Even in unprecedented challenge of COVID19 pandemic, Jammu & Kashmir is among the best performing States/UTs in India, thanks to the empowering framework and access to national resources. Its COVID testing rate is almost 4 times that of national average. J&K was among the first states/UT to setup Covid-19 dedicated hospitals. The Central Government

sanctioned a relief package of INR 350 crores (USD 50 million) to assist the tourism sector, business as well as construction workers.

The experience of the last one year shows that the people and government of J&K are determined to march along the road to development, peace and prosperity in step with the rest of India.