

# J&K youth can become climate change leaders: KU VC

*Inaugurates programme to establish Youth Forum under Himalayan Knowledge Network initiative*



**Srinagar, Aug 22:** Vice-Chancellor University of Kashmir Prof Nilofer Khan on Monday inaugurated a programme organised to establish a Youth Forum in Jammu and Kashmir that would pursue the goals of sustainable development in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR).

The programme was organised by J&K Chapter of Himalayan Knowledge Network (HKN), an initiative coordinated by G.B.Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, Uttarakhand, with the support from National Mission on Himalayan Studies, under the aegis of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.

In her presidential address, Prof Nilofer said any academic or research activity is incomplete with the involvement of students and youth.

“It is the ideas from our youth that we, at the institutional level, must cash in on for better policy formulation on critical issues concerning the environment conservation in the Indian Himalayan Region,” she said, adding that given their potential, the youth from Jammu and Kashmir can become future climate change leaders to realise the “wider mandate” that initiatives like HKN aim to fulfill.

Dean Research KU Prof Irshad A Nawchoo and Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir also shared the dais as special guests and highlighted how student-driven programmes can bring about a discernible change at grassroots by going into communities to raise awareness on environment conservation and related issues.

Nodal person for J&K Chapter of HKN, Prof Zafar A Reshi—the chief coordinator of the programme—said the Youth Forum initiative aims to make youth of J&K UT active partners in programmes, policies and decision-making related to sustainable development in accordance with the emphasis laid by Niti Aayog for sustainable development in the IHR.

He said the J&K Chapter of HKN has identified two key areas, including water resources management and biodiversity conservation, to engage youth and address the related issues and concerns.

“The idea is to listen to youth, their perceptions, choices and needs related to environment and incorporate the same in policy formulation,” Prof Reshi said in his welcome address.

Prof Zahoor A Kaloo, Head Department of Botany also spoke on the occasion, while Prof Manzoor A Shah, Director DIQA, conducted proceedings of the event and also delivered a vote of thanks.

Post-inaugural session, the HKN held a poster and painting competitions on Water Resources Management and Biodiversity, respectively, in collaboration with the Department of Students’ Welfare. The competitions saw active involvement of students from within and outside the University. Cultural Officer KU Shahid Ali Khan coordinated the competitions.