

Development must sync with environment: Prof Talat

KU organises awareness programme to mark Constitution Day

Srinagar, Nov 26: Development and environment protection should go hand in hand, Vice-Chancellor of University of Kashmir Prof Talat Ahmad said on Thursday, and called for collective efforts to address the pressing environmental challenges and concerns.

Addressing as chief guest a day-long environment awareness programme, organised to mark the Constitution Day, Prof Talat said: “There is a worldwide focus on sustainable development, which is possible only by ensuring a fine balance between developmental activities and environment protection.”

Referring to deforestation, frequent flooding, climate change and pollution problems, Prof Talat called for joint efforts by policy-planners, academic institutions, non-governmental organisations and citizens to adopt scientific and eco-friendly ways to halt environmental degradation.

“It’s therefore important to continuously raise environment awareness and consciousness levels among all the stakeholders,” he said, asserting that the country’s Constitution confers upon citizens a duty to protect and improve the environment.

Earlier, the VC read out the Preamble of the Constitution at a ceremony attended by top academics and officers.

The offline-cum-online awareness programme “Duty to Protect Environment” was organised by the varsity’s Fundamental Rights and Duties Awareness Cell (FRADAC).

Nodal officer FRADAC Dr Salima Jan, who’s also KU’s Media Advisor and Director EMRC, highlighted the objectives of the

Cell and activities it has undertaken so far. “This Cell, which is a nodal agency for J&K and Ladakh UTs, is mandated with creating awareness in academic institutions about the fundamental duties enshrined in the Constitution,” she said, adding that today’s programme was being organised to mark the 71st anniversary of the Constitution of India, adopted on this day in 1949.

Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Kashmir Prof Mehraj-ud-Din Mir—the guest of honour—elucidated duties and rights underlined in the Constitution vis-à-vis environment. He also referred to various Constitutional provisions that call upon citizens to protect the environment as their fundamental duty.

Dean Research Prof Shakeel A Romshoo said environmental degradation impairs the right to life enshrined in the Constitution. “If the growing environmental problems are not addressed with a sense of urgency, it has the potential to risk our fundamental right to life,” he said.

Referring to the 2014 flood in Kashmir, he said it was a consequence of massive siltation of water courses.

“The particulate matter during the autumn and winter happens to be 300 to 400 micrograms per cubic-meter in Kashmir which is more than the WHO standards,” he said, calling for scientific disposal of pruned material in orchards and conservation of Wular Lake, a largest flood basin of Kashmir, to address the Valley’s pollution and flooding challenges.

“We can’t be in denial about our environmental problems,” Prof Romshoo said.

KU Registrar Dr Nisar A Mir said the university considers it as its fundamental duty to raise awareness on social and environmental problems and help mitigate the same with its research and academic endeavours.

Two acclaimed documentaries on environment, produced by EMRC, were also screened during the programme which, among others, was attended by Dean Academic Affairs Prof Akbar Masood; Dean Students Welfare Prof Raies A Qadri; Dean Colleges Prof GM Sangmi; Dean Open Learning Prof Mushtaq Ahmad; Dean Law Prof M Ayoub; Dean Education Prof Showket Ahmad Shah; FRDAC Nodal Officers; faculty members, research scholars and students from various academic institutions. Faheem-ul-Islam from EMRC conducted proceedings of the programme.

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