

Concluding Ceremony of GSI's Refresher Course held at Government Degree Collage, Drass.



Drass, September 11: Government Degree College, Drass, today hosted the concluding ceremony of the Refresher Course on "Exploration of Critical and Strategic Minerals in the Indus-Tsangpo Suture Zone (ITSZ), Ladakh," organised by the Geological Survey of India (GSI), concluded today after an intensive programme comprising online sessions followed by field-based practical training.

The Refresher Course, organised for the first time in Drass, was aimed at strengthening geological knowledge, enhancing field skills and providing practical exposure to the exploration and identification of critical and strategic mineral resources in the geologically significant Indus-Tsangpo Suture Zone of Ladakh.

Deputy Commissioner Drass, Imteeaz Kacho (JKAS), was the Chief Guest on the occasion while Principal, Government Degree College, Drass, MNM Shabani was the Guest of Honour. Director, Field Training Centre, Aishmuqam (Anantnag, J&K), Geological Survey of India, Kashmir, Dr. Abdul Qayum Paul; Zahid Majeed and Mohammad Ibrahim of GSI, District Mining Officer, Kargil and other Officers of the Mining Department, Assistant Professor, Dr. Javed Iqbal Naqi, and faculty members, Resource Persons from GAIL, trainees and students were among those present on the occasion.

The Officers of GSI informed that Refresher Course included online training starting on September 4, followed by field training that culminated on September 11. During the programme, experts provided participants with theoretical as well as practical understanding of the geological setting of Ladakh, identification of different rock types, tectonic features, mineral exploration techniques and the significance of critical and strategic minerals.

The participants were given practical field exposure at geologically important locations in and around Drass, Tololing, Tiger Hill and the Drass-Pandhrass belt. The field exercises enabled them to observe geological formations, tectonic features and various rock types on the ground, thereby connecting classroom concepts with actual field conditions.

GSI officials and trainees, including Nasir Mehdi, Anushka, Akash Singh and other members, shared their experiences during the programme and described the field-based training as highly useful for refreshing geological knowledge and developing a better understanding of mineral exploration. They expressed hope that similar training and exploration activities would be extended to other geologically significant areas in the future.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the efforts of Geological Survey of India for choosing Drass for the training programme and thanked the organisers, experts and participants for making the initiative meaningful and result-oriented. He said Drass and the wider Ladakh region possess enormous potential for geological research and scientific exploration. Further, he encouraged students and young researchers to carefully study the region, strengthen their field knowledge and explore opportunities for research and innovation.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized that scientific knowledge should ultimately contribute towards the sustainable development of the region. Greater research, responsible exploration and a deeper

understanding of local geological resources, he said, can open new avenues for Drass while ensuring that its natural wealth is approached scientifically and responsibly. He expressed delight over the fact that GSI has been carrying out mineral investigation for critical and strategic minerals in the Drass for a number of years with encouraging results. Such mineral-based projects are expected to directly contribute to the revenue of UT Ladakh, he added.

Principal, Government Degree College, Drass, MNM Shabani welcomed the participants and expressed delight at being given a chance to host the concluding ceremony of the Refresher Course in the College. While appreciating the efforts of the GSI team for organizing the programme in Drass, he said such initiatives are particularly beneficial for students of geology as they provide exposure beyond textbooks and help them understand how geological studies and research are undertaken in the field. Students were encouraged to make the best use of such opportunities to strengthen their academic foundation, pursue research and prepare for competitive and professional examinations.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Abdul Qayum Paul highlighted the importance of capacity and resource building in the field of geology. He said geology is a vast discipline and Ladakh provides an exceptional natural setting for geological studies due to its diverse rock formations, tectonic features and mineral potential.

He underlined that such refresher courses provide professionals and students an opportunity to update their knowledge while gaining direct exposure to field geology. He also highlighted the wider role of geological knowledge in mineral exploration, scientific research and disaster management.

The speakers observed that the unique geological setting of Ladakh makes the region highly valuable for scientific study. The programme also highlighted the importance of systematic research into critical and strategic minerals, which have growing significance for modern technologies and national development.

Rainbow Trout Pickle Initiative

On the sidelines of the programme, the Deputy Commissioner also launched a Rainbow Trout Pickle initiative of the Degree College, describing it as a promising value-addition initiative linked to locally available resources and skills. He was informed that the pickle was being produced and marketed as a part of the skilled course of the college.

The Deputy Commissioner noted that Rainbow Trout is found and cultivated in various parts of the Drass region including areas such as Khunda and Goshan besides other locations where trout-related activities have immense potential.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for value addition, proper branding, packaging, promotion and market creation for local trout products. He said innovative products based on locally available resources could contribute to livelihood generation and help build a distinct identity for products originating from Drass. Further, he encouraged stakeholders to explore ways of developing and promoting such products under a strong local identity and to work towards making locally developed products a matter of pride for Drass.

The event also reflected the broader emphasis on skill development and youth engagement, encouraging students and young people to acquire practical knowledge, explore new opportunities and contribute to the development of the district.

The programme concluded with appreciation for the Geological Survey of India, Government Degree College, resource persons, trainees and all stakeholders who contributed towards the successful conduct of the refresher course.

The first-of-its-kind training programme in Drass provided participants with valuable field exposure and reinforced the importance of geological research, critical and strategic mineral exploration, capacity building and scientific understanding of the unique geology of Ladakh.