



December 03, 2011

COMBATING MILITANCY

PSUs asked to recruit youths from J&K

BY PRASHANT K. NANDA & SAHIL MAKKAR

NEW DELHI

The Union government plans to involve leading public sector firms in an effort to impart vocational training to at least 40,000 youngsters of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) over the next five years to make them employable.

Union home minister P.Chidambaram on Friday met senior officials of several public sector firms, including Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd, Power Finance Corp. Ltd, Indian Oil Corp. Ltd, Indian Overseas Bank and NTPC Ltd, and sought their support **for the project named Udaan, Hindi for flight.**

The National **Skill** Development Corp. (NSDC), which is managing the project, confirmed the development. **“The home ministry feels that opportunities should be given to the youths of J&K so that they don't feel alienated from the mainland,”** said a spokesperson for NSDC. **“The home minister asked PSUs (public sector units) to give proposals for their involvement.”**

Besides training them, the companies may also recruit some J&K youths, he said.

Conceived earlier this year by the home ministry, the project remained stuck until Congress general secretary Rahul Gandhi showed interest in its implementation recently.

In the last week of October, Gandhi invited a group of students from Kashmir to discuss the issue in New Delhi. **Udaan is part of the Union government's efforts to combat militancy in J&K by bringing young people in the state into the national mainstream.**

Kashmir University and Islamic University of Science and Technology are partnering the government in the initiative, designed in line with the recommendations of an expert group.

It aims to encourage industry to train 8,000 youths annually and then employ them. **Proposals by the Future Group and the Confederation of Indian Industry to take the project forward have been approved by the centre.**

“We believe that talented people are available everywhere and our consumer base is diverse. This is but natural that we are getting involved,” said Future Group chairman Kishore Biyani.

Once students are selected under the project, they will be moved to the company training centres for a **skill** gap assessment for specific jobs.

During the training period they will be paid a stipend.