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Principal Secretary to PM to meet NSDC, industry chambers to discuss employability of youth

PMO for speeding up skill development in J&K

**SURABHI & GUNJAN
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The Prime Minister's Office is expected to call a meeting with industry chambers and the National Skill Development Corporation to fast track skill development programmes in Jammu & Kashmir.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister TKA Nair will take stock of the progress on plans made by industry chambers Ficci, CII and Assocham along with the NSDC on Wednesday for improving employability of the youth in the state.

The project named 'Udaan' has been drafted in line with the recommendations of the Expert Group on Employment in Jammu & Kashmir under C Rangarajan and aims at a special industry initiative (SII) to train 8,000 youth per annum and consequently employ them in industrial and commercial organisations.

"The meeting will lay down the broad contours of the support that the industry needs in executing the initiative in the valley due to challenges posed by the problem of extremism in the state. A partnership between the corporate sector

and the ministry of home affairs will also be explored,” a senior government official associated with the development said.

The idea is to provide employment to 40,000 unemployed youth including college dropouts over the next five years. Local institutions that are going to partner with the industry include Kashmir University and Islamic University of Science and Technology. The project is proposed to be executed through a 50-50 partnership between the government and the industry as far as funding is concerned. A parallel exercise to train Kashmiri youth for self-employment is also likely to take place.

Some of the companies that have shown initial interest in running skill development and vocational training programmes in the state include bigwigs like Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Godrej & Boyce, Crompton Greaves, Bajaj Auto and Tata Motors among others.

Sectors identified by the expert group include agriculture, horticulture, tourism, handicrafts, information technology and micro small and medium enterprises.

The expert group had pointed out that in the recent past the turmoil in Kashmir was indicative of alienation and disappointment over lack of opportunities in the state.