LUDHIANA: Punjab Agriculture University (PAU) and Columbia Water Center (CWC) celebrated Punjab Water Day on Saturday. The event, inaugurated by PAU vice-chancellor Manjit Singh Kang, was attended by more than 120 farmers, especially from the central districts. Former chairman of commission for agricultural prices and costs (CACP) SS Johl was the guest of honour.

Kang said while the Green Revolution, on one hand, has enhanced prosperity of farmers and ensured food security of the nation, on the other, it has resulted in depleting water table, impaired ecology and deteriorated soil health that is threatening to endanger the very sustainability of agriculture. He highlighted the importance of water management not only in India but also worldwide.

Referring to grains from Punjab being exported to other parts as virtual shifting of water, Johl said farmers were being provided no compensation for that.

Citing the mismatch between population growth and food production rate, he laid emphasis on the need for an effective population policy as being followed in China and other countries.

Moving onto the tricky issue of granting aid, Johl categorically said farmers should be provided financial support for infrastructure but charged for electricity and water, while ensuring timely and adequate supply.

Speaking about the importance of observing the day, director of CWC, New York, Upmanu Lall, said the event helped to bring together various stakeholders to develop a model...
and corporate strategies.

He hoped it would reverse groundwater table depletion, while mitigating climate and risks at all levels, improve agricultural supply and value chain reliability and promote increases in the livelihood of farmers.

Throwing light on the works done by the university in this regard, additional director (communication) Jagtar Singh Dhiman said PAU had undertaken mega-campaigns through posters, creating awareness about water literacy. He suggested that domestic circles should contribute in water saving. Schools and colleges and NGOs should also be involved in saving endeavours.

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