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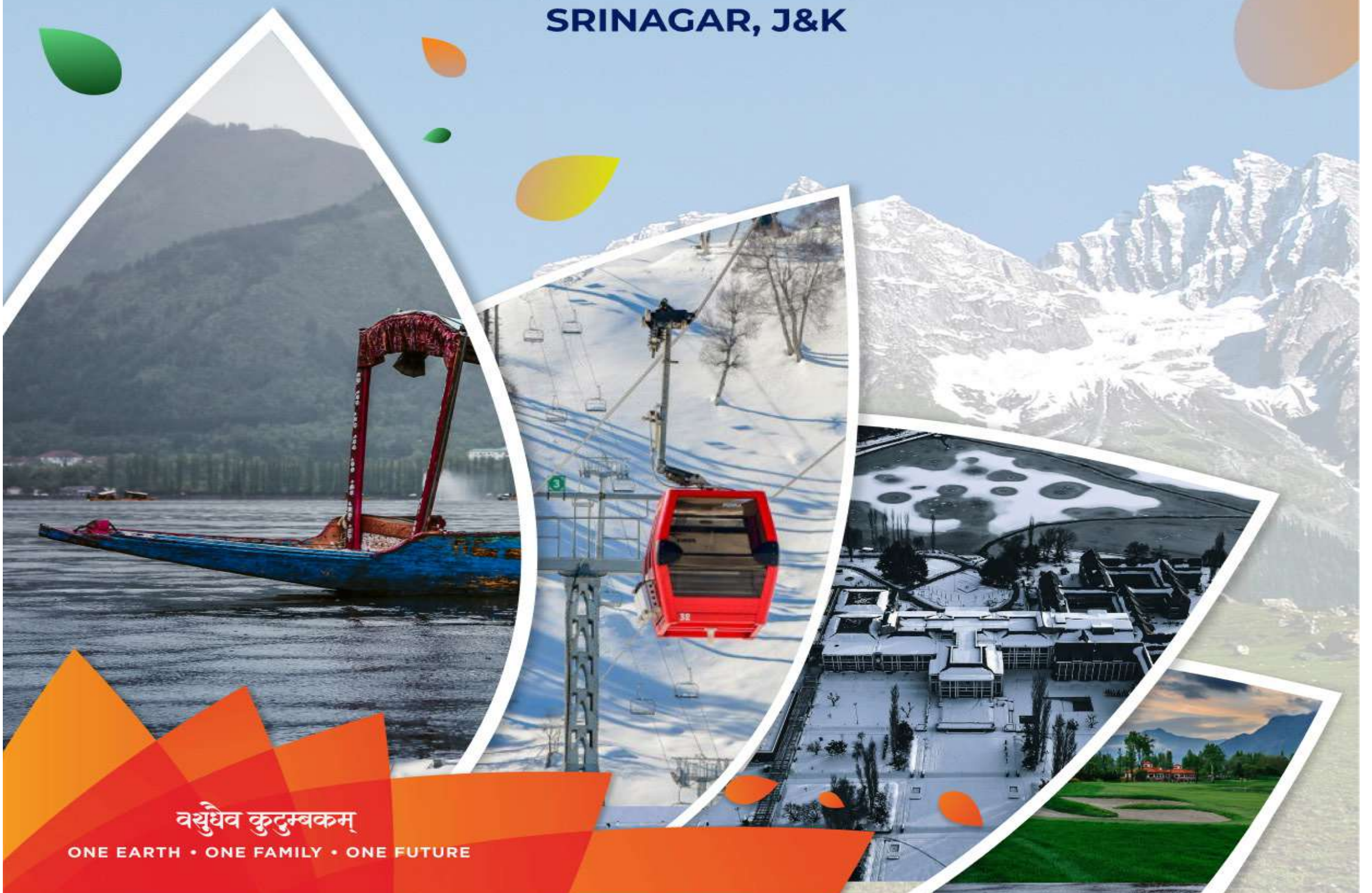
JAMMU & KASHMIR WELCOMES G20 DELEGATES

Srinagar, J&K
May 22-24, 2023

3rd TOURISM WORKING GROUP MEETING

MAY 22-24, 2023
SRINAGAR, J&K

DIPK-1985/23 Date: 21 / 05 / 2023



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ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE



Issued by: Department of Information & Public Relations, J&K



Online Search To Make Up Lost Time With Artificial Intelligence

Online search, dominated by Google for 25 years, has become as banal as making a phone call, but it could finally be getting a profound reset thanks to artificial intelligence. The classic search and click made ubiquitous by the Google behemoth is getting a major AI makeover as bots ChatGPT, Bard or Bing see hundreds of millions of web surfers seek answers to life's questions in a new way.

"People are realizing how many times they use Google search, not to find a webpage, but to answer a question," said Stefan Sigg, Chief Product Officer at Germany-based Software AG.

Microsoft, long considered big tech's boring uncle, has jumped fearlessly and some say blindly into generative AI search with an update to Bing, the long struggling also-ran to Google.

Bing's bot, which was released worldwide after three months of testing, responds directly to a query instead of throwing out a pageful of links for the search user to wade and click through.

With a prompt, Bing will compare two products, brainstorm vacation plans or reassuringly help prepare a job interview, for example.

'Heavy lifting'

"Now, search does the heavy lifting for you," said Cathy Edwards, VP Engineering at Google, during the company's annual I/O developers conference in California.

The user no longer has to "sift through the information and then piece things together," she said.

At the conference, matching Bing, Google presented the latest iteration of its web search juggernaut, but instead of the constellation of links that confronts you today, a chatbot offered a few paragraphs to answer what you were looking for.



Google's AI amped search engine will slowly be released in the United States as a start, the company said.

"What we're trying to do is make it more natural and intuitive, as easy as asking a friend and getting information from someone who's really knowledgeable for any question you have in the world," Elizabeth Reid, Vice President of Search, told AFP.

Beyond search, Google and Microsoft have deployed generative AI tools to other products, from cloud to word processing, presenting bots as helpful "co-pilots," to use the term hammered home by the Windows-maker.

Personal 'genie'

"I think search is going to be fractured into a million pieces, and integrated into all sorts of interfaces, and not just one monolithic centralized place, which is what Google has become," said John Battelle, author and media entrepreneur.

But if every website acts like a faithful friend, it will become

ever more difficult to distinguish good information from bad, he warned.

"Would you trust an AI travel agent to give you the right deal? No," Battelle said.

"I want my own 'genie', my 'agent' to negotiate with the website. If it's just me against an AI, I'm gonna lose. I want one on my side."

Battelle's "genie" would digest a user's information from the smartphone, computer, TV or car to help answer and act for the user in life online.

The bot, powered by personal data, would buy the best vacuum cleaner according to your tastes, habits and current promotions, sparing a long and tedious search

The AI personal assistant would have to come for a fee, ensuring that personal data wasn't harvested and sold to the highest bidder for advertising or online tracking, as it is on social media.

Startups such as Replika, Anima and others are already moving into the companion AI space.

'Vital role'

For the time being, Google isn't going to disappear, said Jim Lecinski, professor of marketing at the Kellogg School of Management.

"We could have had this same conversation about four years ago with the advent of voice assistants like Alexa or Siri,"

"Oh wow, search is going away because people are just going to speak their query to their car and device on their kitchen counter. Well, here we are," he said.

The disruption of generative AI could, however, challenge the internet's business model, as it can allow users to find the product they want "without having to click on an ad," Lecinski said.

But he has no doubt that the giants, ad-based Google and Meta first among them, will find solutions.

In the new version of Google search presented on Wednesday, the ads still appear, either up at the top of the page or lower in the results, depending on the question asked.

"I don't think we can predict what the future will have, but we do think ads will continue to play a vital role," said Google's Reid.

Are You Getting Spam Calls Over WhatsApp? Truecaller Aims To Help Tackle The Menace

Reuters

Truecaller will soon start making its caller identification service available over WhatsApp and other messaging apps to help users spot potential spam calls over the internet, the company said.

The feature, currently in beta phase, will be rolled out globally later in May, Truecaller Chief Executive Alan Mamedi said.

Telemarketing and scamming calls have been on the rise in countries like India, where users gets about 17 spam calls per month on average, according to a 2021 report by Truecaller.

India's telecom regulator in February directed carriers like Jio and Airtel to start blocking telemarketing calls over their networks using

artificial intelligence filters. Truecaller has said it is in discussions with telecom operators to implement such a solution.

"Over the last two weeks, we have seen a spike in user reports from India about spam calls over WhatsApp," Mamedi said, noting that telemarketers switching to internet calling was fairly new to the market.

WhatsApp is the most used messaging platform in India. The company says it uses spam detection technology to spot and take action on accounts engaging in abnormal behavior and lets users block and report problematic accounts.

For Truecaller, India is its biggest market with 250 million users. It has 350 million users globally and earns its revenue from advertising, subscription services, and verified listings from businesses.

Google To Delete All Personal Accounts Inactive For 2 Years

IANs

Google has said it will delete personal accounts and their content that haven't been used or signed in for at least 2 years.

The company said it will purge the content in inactive accounts within Google Workspace (Gmail, Docs, Drive, Meet, Calendar), YouTube and Google Photos.

While the policy took effect on Tuesday, it will not immediately impact users with an inactive account and the earliest the company will begin deleting accounts is December 2023.

"The policy only applies to personal Google Accounts, and will not

affect accounts for organisations like schools or businesses," Ruth Kricheli, VP, Product Management at Google, said in a statement.

The update aligns Google policy with industry standards around retention and account deletion and also limits the amount of time Google retains the unused personal information.

"If an account hasn't been used for an extended period of time, it is more likely to be compromised. This is because forgotten or unattended accounts often rely on old or re-used passwords that may have been compromised, haven't had two factor authentication set up, and receive fewer security checks by the user," Google explained.

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Timely Transportation

- Critical care ambulances can transport patients to hospitals more quickly and safely than private transport, reducing the time between the onset of the medical emergency and the start of treatment. This can be critical in cases of heart attacks, strokes, or traumatic injuries, where every minute counts.

Reduced Complications

- Patients who receive critical care ambulance services are less likely to experience complications during transit or upon arrival at the hospital. This can result in shorter hospital stays, reduced healthcare costs, and improved patient outcomes.

Better Coordination

- Critical care ambulance services often work closely with local hospitals and emergency medical services (EMS) to ensure that patients receive the appropriate care and treatment. This coordination can help to reduce the risk of medical errors and ensure that patients receive the best possible care.

Improved Accessibility:

Critical care ambulance services can help to improve the accessibility of healthcare services in remote or underserved areas. This can help to reduce health disparities and improve the overall health of the population.

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Srinagar All Set To Host 3rd G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Third G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting will be held here from May 22 to 24, and the stage is set for discussions and deliberations on final deliverables, Union Tourism Secretary Arvind Singh said on Sunday.

Addressing a press conference at SKICC, the official, giving details, said that there are two key deliverables of the Tourism Working Group, which include GOA Roadmap for Tourism as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) and G20 Tourism Ministers' Declaration.

This is the only working group meeting taking place in Srinagar as part of G20 effort with excellent response from all the member countries, all the invited countries and the international organisations, having the highest participation registered compared to the first two Tourism Working Group Meetings at Rann of Kutch and Siliguri.

Singh also said that G20 member countries, invited countries, and international organisations will give valuable



Performers during a special sports event at Dal Lake ahead of G20 meet (Photo Credit: PTI)

inputs and feedback on these two draft documents and after negotiations with G20 Member Countries on these drafts, final versions will be

placed in the Fourth Tourism Working Group Meeting.

He said that the Srinagar meeting will deliberate on the five key priority areas namely

Green Tourism, Digitalisation, Skills, MSMEs, and Destination Management. These priorities are key building blocks for accelerating the **More on P6**

'Most Significant Event' In J&K: Shringla

The G20 Tourism Working Group meeting here has the highest delegate participation and will be the most significant event held in Jammu and Kashmir, G20 Chief Coordinator Harshvardhan Shringla said on Sunday.

"We have the highest representation of foreign delegates in this working group meeting than the earlier two meetings. All I can say is we are very very happy with the turnout. We have the making of a unique meeting," Shringla told reporters here. Shringla was responding to a question about some member countries not registering for the working group meeting. Accompanied by Jammu and Kashmir Chief

secretary AK Mehta and the central government's Tourism Secretary Arvind Singh, he briefed the media about the itinerary of the three-day meeting that begins on Monday. Srinagar will host the third G20 Tourism Working Group meeting from May 22-24. The first meeting was held in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat in February and the second one in West Bengal's Siliguri in April. Shringla said the working group meeting has the broader objectives to present India's rich and diverse cultural identity and promote the country's tourism potential to the world. "The very idea is to use this meeting to bring attention to Jammu and Kashmir and how it can help revive handicrafts, etc. **More on P6**

Air Marshal Visits IAF Station Jammu

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Air Officer Incharge Administration (AOA) of Indian Air Force, Air Marshal K Anantharaman, on Sunday visited the Air Force station here, a defence spokesman said.

Accompanied by Director Education (Schools) at Air Headquarter, and Deputy Command Education Officer, Headquarter Western Air Command, the Air Marshal was received by Air Officer Commanding, Jammu, he said.

On arrival, the spokesman said, the Air Marshal was briefed on operation and administrative infrastructure and security preparedness of the station.

He also visited the Air Force School which has come up with a state-of-the-art Wi-Fi enabled campus.

The Air Marshal also visited various ongoing work sites and interacted with young officers of the base.

He appreciated the operation and security orientation of the station and complimented the team for setting new benchmarks, the spokesman said.

Man Held For Passing Secret Info To Militant

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: An operative of the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) outfit, who was allegedly passing secret information about the movement of security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, has been arrested, an NIA official said on Sunday.

The arrest of Mohd Ubaid Malik of north Kashmir's Kupwara came amid a crackdown against conspiracies being hatched by militant organisations based across the border to destabilise India through militant attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, a spokesperson of the federal agency said.

"Malik was in constant touch with a Pakistan-based JeM commander. Investigations have revealed that he was passing on secret information, especially regarding the movement of troops and security forces, to the Pakistan-based commander," the spokesperson said.

The official said various incriminating documents showing his involvement in the furtherance of militant activities were recovered from his possession at the time of his arrest.

The National Investigation Agency registered the militant conspiracy case suo motu on June 21 last year to unearth the conspiracies hatched by cadres and underground workers of various militant organisations on the directions of **More on P6**

Army Launches Massive Search Operation In Poonch

People Asked To Stay Indoors As A Precautionary Measure



Press Trust Of India

Jammu: The Army on Sunday launched a massive search operation in a forward area in Jammu and Kashmir's border district of Poonch after troops picked up suspicious movement and opened fire, officials said.

No one was injured in the firing by the soldiers on patrolling duty at Keri in Mendhar sector around 3 am, they said.

Though there was no retaliation from the suspected persons, the Army launched a massive search operation in the area and adjoining forests to ensure that there is no presence of militants, the officials said.

All roads leading to the besieged vast area were closed and the residents were asked to stay indoors as a precautionary measure, they said, adding the searches were completed in the populated area but no one was arrested.

However, the combat operation is still going on in the woods but there was no contact with the suspected militants so far, the officials said.

The nearby Bhata Dhurian witnessed a deadly ambush by militants on an Army vehicle on April 20, resulting in the killing of five soldiers and injuries to a major-rank officer.

At least six **More on P6**

Historic Opportunity To Showcase J&K's Culture, Tourism: LG

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday said the G20 working group meeting in Jammu and Kashmir is a historic opportunity for people of the Union Territory to showcase their culture, heritage, tourism and warm hospitality.

The third G20 Tourism Working Group meeting is scheduled to take place in summer capital Srinagar from May 22 to 24.

The G20 members represent around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the global trade and more than 60 per cent of the world's population. Such a gathering will provide huge boost to the shared vision of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' globally and accelerate socio-economic



development of Jammu Kashmir, Sinha said.

"G20's 3rd tourism working group meeting starting from May 22 is a historic opportunity for 13 million citizens of J&K UT to showcase

The LG sought active support of the people for the successful conduct of the event.

"It is our resolve to build a new, Atmanirbhar Jammu Kashmir in this Amrit Kaal. This historic occasion of the G20 meeting will inspire the generations of Jammu Kashmir and infuse new enthusiasm, new confidence in the society," he said.

Meanwhile, in a veiled attack on the BJP, Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) chairman Ghulam Nabi Azad said holding of G20 meet in Srinagar was a welcome step but not holding a similar event in winter capital Jammu was "unfortunate".

"It was unfortunate that the G20 summit was not held in Jammu also, though it is a welcome step to provide an opportunity to **More on P6**

Extends Welcome To G20 Delegates

The Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday extended a warm welcome to delegates of G20 nations & members of multi-lateral organisations to Jammu Kashmir for 3rd Tourism Working Group Meet. He also expressed gratitude to Prime Minister for providing the historic opportunity and honour to J&K to host G20 meeting.

"I extend a warm welcome to distinguished delegates of G20 nations & members of multi-lateral organisations to 'Paradise on Earth'. From dreamy scenery to enchanting lake to snowcapped majestic mountains, J&K offers perfect environs for 3rd Tourism Working Group Meet". Sinha posted on Twitter handle.

"I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji for providing this historic opportunity & honour to J&K to host G20 meeting. I am sure the delegates will also be able **More on P6**

From Zabbarwan Hills To Dal Lake, Srinagar Under Sharp Security Gaze

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Counter-drone teams of the elite NSG are scanning the sky, marine commandos of the navy patrolling the picturesque Dal Lake and scores of security personnel are on vigil on the ground to ensure a safe and secure G20 meeting beginning here on Monday, officials said.

Preparing to receive at least 60 delegates and 20 journalists from different parts of the world, the authorities in militancy-hit Jammu and Kashmir have made elaborate arrangements for the third G20 Tourism Working Group meeting at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC).

This is the first international meeting being held in Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of the erstwhile state into two Union Territories - Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Aiming to ensure minimum policing and maximum security, the Jammu and Kashmir Police has roped in the army to cover the higher reaches of the



Zabarwan Range overlooking the meeting venue and accommodation facilities for the guests.

Thirty companies of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), which had earlier

been taken out of Jammu and Kashmir for election duty in the rest of the country, have since been recalled to further strengthen security in the valley, where intelligence intercepts

have suggested the presence of improvised explosive devices or a vehicle-based IED.

Officials said teams of the National Security Guard (NSG) counter-drone unit have been

pressed into service to ensure that no unwanted aerial intrusion takes place. A hit team of the elite "Black Cat" commandos is in readiness to deal with any militancy incident and a hostage-like situation.

"MARCOS teams will be patrolling the Dal Lake along with personnel from the river wing of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and CRPF as the convention centre is located on the bank of the water body," an official involved with the security preparations said.

The marine commandos, or MARCOS, of the navy have been stationed at the Wulur Lake in the valley since mid-1990s to prevent any infiltration from the Line of Control as militants had been using the water body to enter into the hinterland.

The officials said that a proposed visit of the delegation to Gulmarg, also known as Switzerland of Asia, had to be dropped in view of the paucity of time.

They said the delegates would visit Pari Mahal, Cheshmashai and other Mughal gardens, besides taking a walk on the renovated Polo View **More on P6**

Kashmir Favourite Location For Film-Makers Again: Singh

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The change in Jammu and Kashmir over the past few years has raised the confidence of the film industry, which is now keen to make the Valley a prized location for movie making, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Sunday.

Singh, the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, said Jammu and Kashmir's return to normalcy has led to an increase in tourism, which also has had an effect on film-making in the Valley.

The G20 meeting in Srinagar, beginning on Monday, has a session on Film Tourism for Economic Growth, he said.

"The very fact that the G20 is being held here (Srinagar) is itself an indication of the change that has happened over the last few years, particularly, following the pathbreaking and very decisive initiatives taken by Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Singh said.

Singh said shooting a film



at a tulip garden in Holland would not be the same as filming at a tulip garden in Kashmir as the costs would be much lower here.

"In Kashmir, within a radius of a few kilometres, you have fountains, lakes, plateaus, hills, snow-clad peaks. I am sure this is going to open up. The confidence building has also happened because of the very successful tourist season we had recently," Singh said.

He said Kashmir was one of the favourite destinations for Bollywood **More on P6**

The Perplexing Status Quo for Muslim Fiction

Mona Zaneefor

In the category of young adult (YA) fiction, one can find a relatively solid number of Muslim-oriented novels, some of which are consistently championed in the Muslim novel-reading community for their positive representation of Muslims. Through mass marketing, these portrayals are lauded and viewed as authentic. Though I do not personally read young adult fiction, it recently occurred to me that I could perhaps curate a small Muslim fiction collection in the library of the school where I work. I began to research the most popular YA novels which were repeatedly garnered praise across social media. The project was exciting, I hoped that teenagers seeing themselves in such novels would not only lead them to read more books, but also aid them in feeling proud and confident in their identities.

Alas, it did not take long before I came across the very un-Islamic elements in these novels. Given that this was alien territory to me, perhaps such elements stood out even more. These novels are not liberal in an ideological sense. The authors seamlessly weave Islam onto the pages, enabling the reader to discern the characters' love for Islam and their unashamed observation of the religion. References to their Islamic identity include characters praying salah, declaring faith in God, reciting the Qur'an, and wearing the hijab. For example, in Zoulfa Katouh's recently-published novel *As Long As The Lemon Tree Grows*, the female protagonist Salama ensures that her hair is only visible when there are no non-mahrams (men permissible to marry) around. She leaves her hair out in the presence of her sister-in-law, as is permissible in Islam. In this way, the author highlights the character's adherence to the obligations of the hijab.

While such incorporations of Islam are praiseworthy, these novels, so venerated by Muslim reviewers, do in fact contain several un-Islamic elements. They include some amount of swearing, characters lustfully gazing at the opposite gender, and a casual acceptance of mainstream music. Furthermore, freemixing is so pervasive in some novels that its impermissibility seems to have been swept under the rug for the "greater good" of portraying an Islamic ethos. Even if such content, when compared to other material available, may be the lesser of two evils, Muslim readers must be more critical in order to ensure that the Muslim publishing world flourishes with Allah's blessings. If these novels are touted to the extent that they become benchmarks of Muslim fiction, we can expect it to negatively impact teenage Muslim readers. By normalizing sinful acts, it can undermine their consequences and make it seem acceptable, a grave danger.

In *As Long As The Lemon Tree Grows*, the main love interests, Kenan and Salama, develop their bond over time, prior to marriage. The novel includes several scenes featuring the unmarried couple indulging in each other's company. In one scene, they are alone on a rooftop, watching the sunset. In another, Kenan's "fingers skim [Salama's] sleeve," as he sits "closer than ever before" to the point where Salama can "glance up at him." Such inappropriately close proximity between the two is further detailed in the following passage:

"He comes closer, his fingers touching the



Throughout the novel, the characters are conflicted between their lustful desires and the Islamic code of conduct. However, these conflicts do not culminate in endeavors to please Allah, nor do they result in a well-developed character arc. Rather, they are often presented in a humorous manner, weakening the seriousness of succumbing to one's desires

edge of my lab coat, and everything stills ... and I stare at his long fingers grasping the top of my pocket ... His emerald eyes drop to my lips for a few seconds, and then he looks away. 'Salam,' he whispers, and then he's gone."

This, might I add, was not the only instance of the characters glancing down at each other in obviously inappropriate and unacceptable ways. This is especially disappointing considering how much emphasis Islam has placed on lowering one's gaze — it should be obvious that this does not mean lowering one's gaze only to meet the other gender's lips.

Such juxtaposition of inappropriate gender relations and Islamic acts is immensely misleading, especially for impressionable teenagers. The issue here is that the characters' actions are never textually condemned. In fact, they are even light-heartedly brushed aside: the male love interest in Katouh's novel unabashedly confesses to flirting with her from the get-go. This laxity is reminiscent of another piece of popular Muslim-centric fiction, S.K. Ali's *Love from A to Z*. Although the novel makes explicit references to the Qur'an and Sunnah, it is not without its faults and is just as saturated with un-Islamic elements. For example, the female protagonist Zayneb describes a man's physical features before remembering that her sister would perhaps chastise her to "lower your gaze like a good Muslim, Zu-zu." Yet, with the detailed description of the man and the inclusion of relatable vernacular ("I think what pinged CUTE GUY ALERT..."), Zayneb's internal rebuke falls flat.

Throughout the novel, the characters are conflicted between their lustful desires and the Islamic code of conduct. However, these conflicts do not culminate in endeavors to please Allah, nor do they result in a well-developed character arc. Rather, they are often presented in a humorous manner, weakening the seriousness of succumbing to one's desires. For instance, after seeing Zayneb for the first time, her love interest Adam conspires to encounter her again under the pretext of using the airplane bathroom nearest to her seat. He undergoes a series of fail-

ings (and successes) to accomplish this goal, all meant to amuse the reader. Though the characters are evidently practicing Muslims, their behaviors grossly misrepresent the appearance of a union pleasing to Allah. As Ibn Qayyim says, "It is not possible for the love of al-Rahman and lust for images to gather in one heart. They are opposites that cannot coexist. One will certainly evict the other." 1

In other instances, such as in S. K. Ali's novel, there are two particular moments when the characters suggest that they could needlessly freemix so long as they are in the presence of others. Not only do Adam and Zayneb disclose what they initially found physically attractive in each other, they also pronounce their mutual feelings in a highly suggestive metaphor. Zayneb is symbolized as water, and after Adam admits that he wants "to know all about the water. Everything about it. 'Cause I . . . like the water," he admits to being "really thirsty" for Zayneb. This conversation is ultimately justified to the reader by the fact that the two are in a public place.

The gender relations depicted in these novels occur in stark contrast to the Qur'anic story of Prophet Musa and the two women who wanted to water their herd. As Sheikh Alomgir Ali expounds: "The two women withheld from watering their flocks because they did not want to intermingle with the men and so wanted to wait until the men finished watering their flocks. Musa . . . out of his kindness and wanting to help others, offered his assistance to them. When their father heard of his integrity and good character, he wanted to hire him as a worker." 2 In addition, Allah mentions the shyness by which one of the women approached Prophet Musa when her father wanted to reward him for his kindness.

These elements of shyness and abstention from unnecessary freemixing are absent in novels like *As Long As The Lemon Tree Grows* and *Love from A to Z*. In the Author's Note of her novel, Katouh expresses her desire for the love story to be reminiscent of a Jane Austen novel. However, even Western classical literature is

not puritanical in an Islamic sense for Muslims to borrow from wholesale. With this in mind, it raises the question of why these un-Islamic acts are even considered necessary to include? Is it because writers themselves are unaware of the sinful nature of such acts, or do they consider this a lesser evil in the larger mission of crafting relatable characters for the youth of today?

While there certainly is value in Zoulfa Katouh and S. K. Ali's novels, we must ask ourselves: is this the standard we must accept for Muslim fiction? While many justify the more positive examples as outweighing the bad, it is nonetheless frustrating to see these novels marketed on a large scale within the book-reading Muslim community, sans any cautionary disclaimer. If a young impressionable mind consumes content in which haram acts are committed by a Muslim character, romanticized by the author, and publicly brushed aside by reviewers, it will only cause confusion in understanding religious boundaries.

This is not the first time that Muslim representation in the media has been questioned, particularly in media produced by Muslims themselves. For example, consider the Marvel Studios' series *Ms. Marvel*: many showrunners, including executive producer Sana Amanat, are Muslims, yet they fail to clearly distinguish between Islam and the unlawful acts in the dominant, Western culture of the show's setting. As a result, music, free-mixing, and even dating become common occurrences despite them being haram.

And the record [of deeds] will be placed [open], and you will see the criminals fearful of that within it, and they will say, "Oh, woe to us! What is this book that leaves nothing small or great except that it has enumerated it?" And they will find what they did present [before them]. And your Lord does injustice to no one. [18:49]

We will be held accountable for every one of our small and great deeds, including what we propagate. While it may seem unrealistic to expect every Muslim novel to be stripped clean of un-Islamic elements, it is the task of Muslim reviewers to do their due diligence and highlight them. Reviewers must be more transparent with what they publicize, especially when that would not only benefit a parent, guardian, or educator, but teenagers themselves. Moreover, Muslim writers themselves should do better by writing against the current Muslim fiction status quo. Writers should research and study the Shariah regarding the different elements present in their stories. I do not believe that Muslim writers must engage their characters in the haram to satisfy the genre or their target audience, but this is not to say that Muslim characters must be one-dimensional, with no flaws. As long as their negative traits or shortcomings are not narratively condoned, these traits can always serve as part of a larger character arc. Ultimately, the gravity of these issues should not be diluted for the sake of Muslim representation or in an effort to conform to existing markets or industries. Instead, we should always consider the Shariah our standard in producing all media, including YA novels.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. The article was originally published by Traversing Tradition

I'll Come With A Lighthouse: A Saga Of Two K

Takbeer Salati

SAYAN Aich Bhowmik is currently employed as an Assistant Professor in the department of English, Shirakole College, West Bengal, India. He is also the co-editor of Plato's Caves Online, a semi academic blog on life, culture, poetry and politics. His poems have appeared in *Kitaab*, *South Florida Poetry Journal* and *The Punch Magazine* and most recently he was longlisted for the *Ralph Angel Poetry Prize* organized by *Foundlings Press*.

Sayan Bhowmik's book *I'll Come with a Lighthouse* follows its own path of the themes related to horror, pain, grief, sorrow, longing, and spatial living in the places he witnesses his 'existence' the most-Dhaka, Kashmir, Calcutta/ Kolkata to name a few. Uncomfortable with the blurred visions of partition from his memory that is associated with his lived spaces split in the vignettes of events which trace in him a sense of remembering and a feeling to write about his moving 'cities' in his book.

I was intrigued by the relation of the book with Kashmir, its striking reference to heaven "Welcome to heaven on earth" and the fact that in a conversation with Sayan, where he had told me that he had never visited Kashmir directed to the several emotions converted into the feelings of pain which threatens one to self-exile and realities crippling many expectations. The faces of partition, especially the continual presence of his grandmother's memory offers a fresh nostalgia for him and a distant echo of belonging both to the

silence and the poems. And the recurring symbol of grandmother also becomes a way to heal and comfort in one of his poems, "Dhaka" he writes:

When I asked her if all this was true?
That women were raped, killed and raped again
That men lost their manhood
Before they lost their lives
She would smile at the Sylhette moon
Always an hour and a half here and there
Compared to the one in Calcutta,
And say, "Some yarns were sharper than knives".

This volume begins with the section titled 'Longing and Solitude' evoking for its readers the matrix of people, cities, spaces all of which he knew one on one and through the tales told by his grandmother. The section, like others is a significant memory which maintains the decorum of his city of birth Calcutta and which he manages as the image of the sparkling moon:

'Moths travel between Calcutta and Kolkata, planning a trip to the moon'

On another scale of 'space and time' he first plays with the language of Calcutta and Kolkata bridging a gap between its old and new factors and then compares both forms to an image of a 'moon'. The city for him is a representation of 'moon' which sparkles on everything and everyone despite the odds they settle themselves in their daily lives. The image of this 'home' the one which is compared to 'moon', is where I found myself too close to Shayan and his poetry. Shayan and I come from two different cultural traditions and backgrounds but given the strangest alliteration of the alphabet 'K' that of Kolkata and

Kashmir helps me to compose our idea of home, connecting us even further. So where do I meet Shayan in this volume? Or what has this volume spoken to me? These stories develop through the lens of yearning, anecdotes, experiences, that sets out to the limitless idea and definition of home. Home, the word which is aroused by the depiction of such places of Kolkata and Kashmir reminds me of a familiar cultural belonging and travel stories between individuals and people belonging to groups of its remnants.

To say that the end of Shayan's volume dives deep into 'politics of Kolkata' would be a plagiarizing the title from one of the sections b) going to place myself in the roots of Kolkata which I can't do because of the absence of lived experience. It can be seen in the perfect nostalgia which is brought up front close from the question that realizes a unique travel from memory to reality-my reality. In the line it can be seen such as:

The post-box outside his door had been emptied of brown leaves that had been living there since autumn.

The first time I read the poem, "The Last Time", I collected one of the former memories from when I had first been away from home for almost seven years. I was reminded of the time, I had said the same phrase for several events such endless 2008 Kashmir curfews, killings, violence and the unnoticed silence on the streets of Kashmir. Also, in his poem, 'Of Simple things', a sudden sense of yearning creeps in when he writes:

No prospects of negotiations with the former lovers
Who spoke to like public address systems?

When I wanted to do was stand like a street-light in the rains.

He is a poet who longs for his language in the environment of strange but intriguing places reminding him of his own relation with them. In the section 'Political poem'; for a reader outside Dhaka the memory seems to revisit through different paradigm (s). The spatial images found in the poems evoke the image of a missing 'home' paralleled with the broken image of it. I met it midway in the unity of two K's. I'll end with one of my favorite "Choices":

The ones talking of madness in love
Not listed or classified
In western medical journals
Will slowly tip-toe their way of your study and pink
Swahili for itself
Then stand in front of you,
Not for your approval
But for a salute of once institution.

Takbeer Salati was born and raised in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. She is currently pursuing her PhD on works of Saadat Hasan Manto. Her works have been earlier published in Samyukta fiction, Mountain Ink and in an anthology 'Covid Metamorphoses' available on Amazon. Her forthcoming short story is due in Muse edition January 2022. Her works have also been published in Life and Legends, Café Dissensus

Uphill Battle: Early Marriages Rob Kashmir Tribal Girls Of Education



“POVERTY!” REASONED HER MOTHER. “I AM 40 AND I TOO GOT MARRIED WHEN I WAS JUST 12 OR 13. I AM A GRANDMOTHER NOW; THIS IS THE LIFE THAT WE LIVE. THIS IS WHAT WE DO,” SHE SAID. “We are nomads and keep wandering from one place to another. No stability means no school. We are always worried for our daughters and getting them married is our priority,” she added.

Farzana Nisar

Far away from the hustle and bustle of the city, a gravely path meandering through tiny hamlets on either side, snakes its way up and down the verdant hills of Kulgam. A 20 km drive from the main town and an hour-long arduous moorland climb later, one arrives at Chak Nagum, a remote tribal village. Although the place has road connectivity, no public transport is available. Scenes of children playing on the roadside, women gracefully balancing firewood on their heads and men tending to cattle capture the daily lifestyle of the community.

Inside a mud house, perched on the slope of a hill, Rozy, a 20-year-old Gujjar girl is kneading dough to prepare meals for her family. Her eyes are striking, shaped like almonds and lined with kohl that contrast sharply with her innocent face. They seem to speak of a longing for something, something beyond the confines of her present reality.

Rozy was married to her cousin, two years back when she was still a 10th class student. Fond of learning, she was “never given a choice between school and marriage,” she said. She always dreamed of completing her education and impart knowledge to the children in her tribal community, however, everything changed for Rozy when she turned 18 and her parents arranged for her marriage. The community tradition of early marriage loomed over her dreams like a shadow, casting a veil of despair and dimming the light of her aspirations. “I felt angry and hopeless, but I knew nothing was going to change their decision,” Rozy said. Ironically,

her brother has completed his bachelor’s degree and is yet to marry.

“I don’t understand why they send us to school in the first place, when they know we have to drop out today or tomorrow,” she said with a tone of resignation.

In the same mold as Rozy, her three sister-in-laws were also married away at quite a young age. The elder two dropped out of school in 10th while the youngest one could continue her studies only up to 8th. “They are themselves less academically inclined,” Rozy’s father-in-law opined, as if trying to defend his decision. “Suli gadi maklew kaem, Zindagi pyath cha barose (I got done with the work as soon as possible, because life is unpredictable),” he said in broken Kashmiri.

Early marriage among the tribal community is a tradition which is very familiar in J&K’s Gujjar-Bakewal tribe. Many girls from these communities of Kashmir still face this customary practice, robbing them of their education. A study titled “Tribal education in Jammu and Kashmir, A case study of Gujjars and Bakewals,” establishes early marriage as one of the critical issues in the field of tribal education. Due to the strong tradition of early marriages among the nomads they do not educate their children that fall between the ages of 10-18. This reason is also adding to the percentage of school dropout among both the tribe which is highest as compared to other tribes, it states. According to another 2015 study by Tribal Research and Cultural foundation (TRCF), 89% of the community members marry their children when they are between 14-18 years of age.

“Although the trend has largely

shifted from child marriage to marrying between 17 to 19 years of age, it continues to undermine tribal girls’ access to education. This is also done because of the mindset where girls are considered to be a liability and not a resource,” Dr Javaid Rahi, a tribal social reformer, and the author of

nomads and keep wandering from one place to another. No stability means no school. We are always worried for our daughters and getting them married is our priority,” she added.

Her mother wants to apply for the marriage assistance scheme – a government initiative designed to

by 15.28% at upper primary level and at the secondary stage the dropout rate was 28.86%.

Sociologist Dr Farah Qayoom, who has researched on tribal communities of Kashmir, said, “The average age at marriage for tribal girls is much less than the minimum age specified by



the study said. “An unmarried girl or a boy is seen as a taboo in this community and it is commonly believed that as a girl ages, her chances of finding a suitable partner decrease. Additionally, as Gujjars continue to have modest weddings, it inadvertently leads to a norm of marrying at a younger age,” he added. Besides, he argued that if the girls belong to a second generation of learners, there are generally higher chances of them completing their education.

In Wampoh area of south Kashmir, tents, made of tarpaulin, are erected haphazardly across a ground, transforming them into temporary dwellings for the Bakewals. Jabeena (name changed), a 15-year-old Bakewal girl, is part of one of the many nomadic families that migrate to Kashmir every year from the Rajouri region of Jammu. Jabeena is engaged to a boy from her community and is expected to get married soon.

“Poverty!” reasoned her mother. “I am 40 and I too got married when I was just 12 or 13. I am a grandmother now; this is the life that we live. This is what we do,” she said. “We are no-

provide financial assistance and support to economically disadvantaged girls for their marriage expenses. But given that Jabeena has never been to school, she has no Date of Birth certificate, a crucial document required to avail the benefits of various government schemes. “In absence of proper address and no schooling, many of these nomad girls don’t have proper documents. This way they easily get away with their official ages,” Rahi said.

According to the census report of India, 2011 J&K figured among the ten states having a literacy rate less than the country average (58.96%) for Scheduled Tribe (ST) population. The literacy rate among tribal males is 60.6 while that of females is 39.70.

A 2021 paper that analysed school progression, enrolment, disparity, and dropout patterns and trends of tribal school going children of J&K from the year 2012-13 to 2018-19 found that the dropout rates of tribal children at various stages have steeply increased. The data suggested that in 2018-19 the dropout rate for girls at primary level was 11.56%, followed

law. Some brilliant tribal girls who do well at school have to drop out because of this custom and they are never able to complete their education afterwards.”

“They bear children at much younger ages that impacts their psycho-social wellbeing. The final outcome is that their development gets compromised,” she added.

As per an analysis of the Sample Registration System (SRS) reports, underage marriage of girls is on rise in J&K. The proportion of women who were married before attaining 18 years of age in Jammu and Kashmir has increased by 0.9 percent from 2012 until 2020. In order to keep a check on underage marriages, the Jammu and Kashmir government has drafted an Act known as “Jammu and Kashmir Prohibition of Child Marriage Rules, 2023” under The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 (Centre Act 6 of 2007), for the prohibition of child marriages through which child marriage prohibition officers (CPMOs) will be appointed and people informing about the wedding of minors will be suitably awarded.



CUET-UG 2023:

76% Attendance In Three Shifts On First Day, Exam Delayed At 12 Centres

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: The second edition of the Common University Entrance Test began on Sunday on a glitch free note, registering 76 per cent attendance even as the exam was delayed at 12 centres due to multiple reasons.

The examination, however, was not marred with technical glitches like the debut edition.

According to UGC chairman M Jagadesh Kumar, in 2 per cent of centres (approximately 12 out of 450), the exam started later than scheduled, but was successfully completed on Sunday.

"The exam started late due to a couple of reasons such as power fluctuations in some centres, and students needing to follow staggered entry. Students were informed in admit cards to enter the center in a staggered manner. But in a few places, since they came late, there was crowding and subsequent delay in the start of the exam. We request the students to come staggered to avoid this kind of situation.

"We have now taken administrative measures to prevent such situations in the future. In many cities, we have also taken help from the traffic police to minimise traffic jams around the centres," Kumar said.

Over 2.65 lakh candidates were scheduled to appear in three shifts on first day.

"Today's overall attendance was 76 per cent, a significant jump from last year, around 62 per cent," he said.

In the first shift, the attendance was 72 per cent, while in the second shift, it was around 77 per cent. The exam was conducted on Sunday at over 440 centres in 271 cities.

Meanwhile, for those who were allotted May 28 as exam dates and also have joint Integrated Programme in Management Admission



(JIPMAT) the same time, have been asked to continue with their management test as the National Testing Agency (NTA) has decided to reschedule their CUET-UG dates.

"The exam went smoothly without any technical glitches. At certain centres, the exam was delayed due to issues in the biometric identification process. However, they were sorted and all candidates successfully completed their exams and were given their allotted time," a senior NTA official said.

The NTA, so far, has issued city intimation slips which has the subjects, dates and slots till May 28. Many candidates, who were allotted May 28, have also registered for the JIPMAT which is scheduled for the same date.

"The NTA via JIPMAT and CUET e-mail are intimating the candidates to sit for the JIPMAT on May 28. Such candidates will be allotted a different date for the CUET-UG exam," the official

added.

Unlike last year, the exam is being conducted in three shifts this time. Earlier, the exam was scheduled to be held from May 21 to May 31, but the National Testing Agency decided to extend the schedule by at least four days to accommodate the higher number of candidates.

Over 14 lakh applications have been received for the CUET-UG this year, registering a 41 per cent increase from the debut edition last year.

CUET-UG remains the second-largest entrance exam in the country in terms of applicants. In the debut edition of CUET-UG, 12.5 lakh students registered themselves and 9.9 lakh of them submitted their applications.

"For the second phase (25-28 May), we are working to provide the admit cards by the 22nd late night or 23 May. We will announce the City information slips for the third phase (29

May - 2 June) on 23 May," the UGC chairman said.

"About 8 lakh students students are appearing in the first phase May 21 to 25. Almost equal number of boys and girls will be writing. Nearly 750 centres spread in all states and UTs are being used. Exams are being conducted in this phase in nearly 200 paper combinations," Kumar said.

The University Grants Commission (UGC), in March last year, announced that undergraduate admissions would be conducted in all central universities through a common entrance test and not based on class 12 marks.

The debut edition of the CUET-UG was conducted in July last year and was marred by glitches, prompting the NTA to cancel the exam at multiple centres.

While several students were informed about the cancellation a night before the exam, many of them were turned away from centres.

The UGC chairman had then said the exam at certain centres had been cancelled following reports of "sabotage".

"NTA has taken all measures to test the readiness of all centres regarding computers, network infrastructure, and security. SoPs are given to observers and invigilators for all centres. Dummy tests have been conducted to check for any possible issues.

"Extra computers have been arranged at each centre. In case of any unforeseen problems with computers, students can be quickly shifted to these computers," he said.

According to NTA officials, in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia as the delay was around 80 minutes, accompanying parents and candidates were served refreshments and also NTA arranged transportation especially for female candidates, to drop them back home.

BRO Camp Being Relocated As Part Of Preservation Of Chumathang Hot Springs In Ladakh



Press Trust Of India

Leh: A camp of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is being relocated from Chumathang hot springs as authorities on Sunday discussed measures required for the preservation and protection of the natural attraction in Ladakh, officials said.

The meeting, chaired by the administrative secretary, Tourism, Kacho Mehboob Ali Khan, identified various measures for immediate action and long-term planning to ensure sustainable development of the hot springs for the benefit of both locals and tourists, the officials said.

The officials said a Detailed Project Report (DPR) is being prepared for the development and sustainable management of the hot springs'.

As an immediate action, they said a sustained cleanliness drive would be launched on Monday, involving the departments of Tourism, BRO, Rural Development, the local panchayat, councillor, Block Development Councillor (BDC) and NGOs who are working on preservation and development of the Rong' area.

The officials said the

councillor, LAHDC of Chumathang constituency and BDC have been assigned to identify suitable patches of land downstream for relocation of the BRO establishment from the existing location near the Hot Springs'.

The BRO has agreed to the plan, the officials said, adding the concerned officials will be requested for formal allocation of the identified land at the earliest.

The Rural Development Department and deputy commissioner, Leh will identify the existing structures around the hot springs which are in a dilapidated condition and are non-functional.

The exercise is important for the incorporation of the area for development in the DPR being prepared as per the approved action plan, the officials said.

They said community participation in the entire exercise is required to make the plan successful.

An awareness drive "Litter open defecation free Chumathang" would also be launched with the active participation of the stakeholders, the officials said.

Prohibitory orders imposed in Guwahati ahead of Amit Shah's visit

Guwahati, May 21 (PTI) Prohibitory orders under Section 144 of CrPC were imposed in Guwahati on Sunday, ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to the city.

Some persons or groups are likely to disturb the normal functioning of offices and obstruct the movement of the public and traffic in the coming days, according to the notification shared by Police Commissioner Diganta Barah.

It is also apprehended that these groups or persons may carry out agitation or demonstration in the city, thereby causing "breach of peace and public order", it said.

"It is necessary to take preventive measures to ensure peaceful movement of public, traffic and also normal activities of local residents and also functioning of offices in above mentioned area," the order stated.

Assembly of more than five persons and procession or slogan shouting in the entire jurisdiction of the police commissionerate has been prohibited with immediate effect until further orders.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma chaired a meeting of cabinet ministers to discuss the upcoming trip of Shah, who is likely to reach Guwahati on Wednesday night on a two-day visit.

"Laying of foundation stone for the National Forensic Science University & distribution of appointment letters will be done during the visit of Hon'ble HM," the Chief Minister's Office tweeted.

After attending the meeting, Education Minister Ranaj Pegu said Shah will grace the ceremonial distribution of appointment letters to approximately 45,000 candidates for various government jobs.

"We had an in-depth discussion on the smooth conduct of both events. Senior officials of all the departments were also present in the meeting," he said.

CONTD. FROM PAGE 3

Srinagar All Set

transition of the tourism sector and achieve the targets for 2030 SDGs.

The Tourism Secretary said that a side event on 'Film Tourism for Economic Growth and Cultural Preservation' will be organised on May 22 and 23, focusing on strategies to promote film tourism in J&K. The event will witness the participation of G20 member countries, invited countries, international organisations, and industry stakeholders. He also said that a draft 'National Strategy on Film Tourism' will be unveiled to provide a roadmap for harnessing the role of films in promoting tourist destinations.

G20 Chief Coordinator and former Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said: "Tourism Working Group has the broader objectives first to present India's rich and diverse cultural identity to the world and to promote tourism potential of India to the world. We have tried to bring in the sustainable tourism, eco tourism, adventure tourism etc. what is actually relevant to J&K."

Shringla also said that the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to ensure that the message of India's G20 Presidency is taken down the grassroots level through Jan Bhagidari process and lot of efforts were made to sensitise the people of this country about G20.

During the 3rd Tourism Working Group meeting, the delegates will also visit the Art and Craft Bazaar organized by the state government showcasing local handicrafts, work of artisans, signifying the importance of community participation. The delegates will also have 'hands-on' experience through DIY activities at the Craft Bazaar.

'Most Significant

It is an opportunity to present our rich culture and heritage. No other working group does it better than the tourism group," he said.

"This will be the most significant event in Jammu and Kashmir," Shringla added.

India is halfway through its G20 presidency and 118 meetings have been held in various parts of the country so far, the G20 chief coordinator said.

"We have hosted 118 meetings from the Rann of Kutch to Kohima and from Kanyakumari and now to Kashmir. There has been a sense of attachment everywhere and I have no doubt it is the same in Srinagar.

"As we drive around Srinagar, we see a completely transformed city. Srinagar today is vastly more beautiful. (It has) better amenities. It is truly a smart city, which you would want to showcase to the world," he added.

Asked about the negative advisories issued by certain western countries about travel to Kashmir, Shringla said these mean nothing when foreign tourists are visiting the Valley despite such advice.

"Last year, 1.88 crore tourists came to Jammu and Kashmir and a very large number of them were foreign tourists. Foreigners will come in and come in large numbers. At the end of the day, what do advisories mean? They mean nothing," he said.

Shringla said the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to ensure that the message of India's G20 presidency is taken down to the grassroots level through the 'Jan Bhagidari' process and a lot of efforts have been made to sensitise the people of the country about the G20.

Giving details of the event, Tourism Secretary Singh said the stage is set for discussions and deliberations on final deliverables.

"There are two key deliverables of the Tourism Working Group, which include the GOA Roadmap for Tourism as a vehicle for achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) and the G20 Tourism Ministers' Declaration," Singh said.

The third Tourism Working Group meeting will deliberate on the five key priority areas -- green tourism, digitalization, skills, MSMEs and destination management. These priorities are key building blocks for accelerating the transition of the tourism sector and achieving the targets for 2030 SDGs, he said.

A side event on 'Film Tourism for Economic Growth and Cultural Preservation' will be organised on May 22-23, focusing on strategies to promote film tourism in the Union Territory, Singh added.

The event will witness the participation of G20 member countries, invited countries, international organisations and industry stakeholders.

Singh further said a draft 'National Strategy on Film Tourism' will be unveiled to provide a roadmap for harnessing the role of films in promoting tourist destinations.

Army Launches

overground workers were arrested for providing shelter to the militants. However, the attackers are still at large and efforts are on to neutralise them, with the Army almost conducting daily search operations and area domination patrols, according to officials.

Historic Opportunity

Kashmir to host this international event," Azad said interacting with various delegations in different blocks of Doda district on his second day visit.

He said the Centre, alongside Kashmir, should have also arranged a meeting of G20 members in Jammu as well to boost the economy and tourism in the region.

Taking a first hand review of the ongoing membership drive of the party, he said the meeting with workers enables him to understand the ground situation and "I am happy to receive direct feedback from the foot soldiers of our party".

"The time has come when all the political parties should rise above the region and religion and shun the divisive politics," he said.

Azad said his party has no space for "nepotism and favoritism" like in the Congress where merit was "undermined to accommodate blue eyed people on top positions".

Extends Welcome

to experience priceless culture, cuisine, besides warm hospitality," he said in another tweet.

Man Held For

their commanders based in Pakistan, the spokesperson said.

"It involves collection and distribution of huge consignments of narcotics, cash, weapons, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), including remote control-operated sticky/magnetic bombs," the official said.

The spokesperson said IEDs and explosives

are often delivered from across the border using drones and are also being assembled locally in order to execute militant attacks in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The attacks are mainly targeted at minorities and security forces personnel," the official said.

The NIA said such conspiracies are being hatched both physically and in cyberspace with the overarching aim of disturbing peace and communal harmony, engaging in militant acts, and waging a war against the Government of India.

From Zabarwan Hills

Market, before leaving Kashmir Valley on Wednesday.

The first working group meeting on tourism was held in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat in February and the second one in West Bengal's Siliguri in April.

Kashmir Favourite

post-Independence.

"It had a versatility of locations and was very cost effective. There were a series of movies which were shot in Kashmir. Then suddenly everything came to halt in 1990. Those movies which were in the midst of production actually had difficulty in finding alternate locations," he recalled.

"A few years ago, it was almost a taboo visiting Kashmir. Such kinds of events had virtually come to a halt since 1990," he said.

Recently, film star Shah Rukh Khan was in the Kashmir Valley to shoot for "Dunki", directed by Rajkumar Hirani.

Despite being geographically distant from Kashmir how Kashmiris in West maintain cultural, social, and emotional linkages with their homeland. Tune-in to latest KO podcast

KASHMIR
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KO PODCAST

G20 Opportunity To Showcase Kashmir As Heaven On Earth: Artist Rouble Nagi

Press Trust Of India

SRINAGAR: Sculpture artist Rouble Nagi is proud that her art work "Hashtag Kashmir" has been installed in Srinagar a day ahead of the G20 working group meeting on tourism.

"I had made this a few months ago and I wanted to install it here. It has been a constant demand from a lot of people and I am happy that it has been installed here ahead of the G20 meeting," she said.

Talking about the sculpture, Nagi, who belongs to Jammu and Kashmir but lives in Mumbai, said it is a "piece of art".

"Each letter of Kashmir is a piece of art. Kashmir is known for its beauty, for landscape,

for its mountains, for different flowers. If you observe minutely, you will see that Kashmir's different landscapes have been depicted on each letter," she said.

Nagi said it was good that the G20 meeting was being held in Srinagar as the forum brings positive focus to various issues.

"Each one of us as Indian and as Kashmiri are proud that G20 is being held in Srinagar, Kashmir. They talk about bringing a lot of positive focus on important issues like global economy, climate change and sustainability," she added.

Nagi said the G20 meeting was an opportunity to showcase Kashmir as the real heaven on earth. "It will give a boost to our tourism."

G20 Meet Will Bolster Economy, Tourism In J&K: BJP Leader

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Senior BJP leader and former deputy chief minister Kavinder Gupta on Sunday said the conduct of a G20 meeting in Srinagar will help in boosting tourism and bolster the economy of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The delegates from member countries (visiting the valley to take part in the G20 meet) are likely to act as ambassadors of Kashmir on their return to their respective nations," Gupta said addressing party workers in Reasi district.

Slamming PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti for "spitting venom" against the government, he said she wants to recreate political space for her party as it has lost relevance after being "exposed number of times for doing nothing for the people of

J-K and treading only to satiate petty personal aspirations".

"While in power, the Kashmir-centric parties never did anything significant for the progress of J-K, rather they indulged in instigating youths to go for stone pelting and other destructive activities driving the UT in backward direction," he alleged.

Gupta praised the BJP government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Centre and said it has made India one of the global economic giants.

"Modi-led government has made J-K the top tourist destination as tourism is thriving like it used to be in 1960s and 70s," he said, asking the party cadre to gear up for a month-long campaign, beginning May 30, to highlight the achievements of the central government over the past nine years.

CS Inaugurates Variable Message Display At TRC Junction

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir, Arun Kumar Mehta, on Sunday inaugurated the new Variable Message Display (VMS) at the TRC Junction on Maulana Azad Road here.

The VMS installation aims to enhance traffic management and provide real-time information to commuters in the city.

Accompanied by Principal Secretary of the Housing and Urban Development Department, H. Rajesh Prasad, and CEO of Srinagar Smart City, Amir Ather Khan, Chief Secretary Mehta expressed his satisfaction with the project's successful completion. Mehta emphasized the importance of technological advancements in improving urban infrastructure.

In a brief conversation, Principal Secretary Prasad stated, "Srinagar is looking beautiful, thanks to the combined efforts of various departments. The installation of the Variable Message Display is a significant step towards transforming Srinagar into a smart city."

CEO Amir Ather Khan echoed

Prasad's sentiments, saying, "The completion of this project enhances our city's capacity to efficiently manage traffic flow and provide timely information to commuters. It brings us one step closer to realizing our vision of a smarter, more vibrant Srinagar."

In light of the recent developments, both officials expressed their enthusiasm for hosting the G20 delegates in Srinagar. The city is now fully prepared to welcome the distinguished guests for the upcoming summit scheduled to commence tomorrow.

The Variable Message Display will play a crucial role in facilitating smooth traffic movement during the G20 summit, ensuring participants and visitors receive essential information regarding routes, schedules, and other relevant updates.

The inauguration of the VMS at TRC Junction represents a significant stride in Srinagar's urban development, demonstrating the city's commitment to embracing modern technologies and creating an environment conducive to both residents and visitors.

G20: One-Day Job Fair, Placement Drive Held At Bandipora

Observer News Service

BANDIPORA: The Department of Employment and Career Counseling (DE&CC) Bandipora, in collaboration with leading employers Sunday organized day long Job Fair cum Placement drive.

The event aimed to bridge the gap between job seekers and employers, providing an opportunity for aspiring individuals to secure meaningful employment.

The Job Fair cum Placement drive, attracted a diverse range of job seekers from various academic backgrounds and skill sets. The event witnessed an overwhelming response from both job seekers and employers, fostering a platform for productive interactions, interviews, and potential job placements.

The delegation of employer Naima Yousuf (MD) from Dr Suliman AL Habib Medical group and visiting Delegates also spoke

about the avenues in private sector.

Throughout the day, participants engaged in informative sessions and career development. These sessions were conducted by industry experts and career counselors, providing valuable guidance to the attendees to enhance their employability. Job seekers had the opportunity to showcase their skills, qualifications, and experiences to potential employers, enabling them to make informed hiring decisions.

The Job Fair cum Placement drive witnessed the active participation of numerous organizations from different sectors including the students of all Paramedical college of District Bandipora.

Placement of female GNM and Staff Nurses in Dr Suliman AL Habib Medical Group through AL Yafur Travels Consultancy was also taken into consideration on the occasion.



ARTISTS GIVING FINAL TOUCHES to murals ahead of G20 meeting set to begin at the Sher-e-Kashmir international convention complex (SKICC) Srinagar on Monday. .

KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

LG Inaugurates 75 Development Projects Worth Rs 186.14 Cr

'Roadmap Laid Down To Modernize & Strengthen Rural Connectivity, Is Being Implemented At A Fast Pace'

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday inaugurated development projects executed by the Public Works (R&B) department in both Jammu and Kashmir Division.

"Majority of the road infrastructure projects will build a road to prosperity and well being to the citizens in far flung areas," said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor reiterated the commitment of the J&K administration to boost tourism potential and to connect important commercial centres.

"Our policy on infrastructure aims to create quality assets, make the facilities user friendly and get rural areas more and more integrated into the mainstream economy. Roadmap laid down to modernize and strengthen rural connectivity, is being implemented at a fast pace," said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor also shared the efforts to bring new momentum to the socio-econom-



ic growth of the UT of J&K. It is also being ensured that the benefits of all the government schemes reach the last person in the queue, he added.

We are moving ahead with the right intent and citizen centric policies to fulfil the dreams and aspirations of all the citizens and take Jammu Kashmir to new heights of glory, said the Lt Governor.

In the last few years, there has been phenomenal progress in the implementation of schemes in rural and urban areas and the credit for this goes to the officers, the people of J&K and all elected public representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions and ULBs, the Lt

Governor further added.

The Lt Governor congratulated the entire team of PW(R&B) Department and everyone associated with the projects.

The 75 development projects worth Rs 186.14 crores inaugurated today include road connectivity projects in Reasi, Udhampur, Doda, Samba, Kathua, Kulgam and Baramulla.

Dr Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary; Shailendra Kumar, Principal Secretary, Public Works (R&B); Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lt Governor and other senior officers were present. PRI representatives and Deputy Commissioners of the Districts were also present through virtual mode.

MeT Predicts Isolated Heavy Rain, Lightning In J&K On May 23

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Weather department here on Sunday forecast mainly dry weather during the next 24 hours and scattered to widespread light to moderate rain and thunderstorms from tomorrow in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meteorological department also issued "orange warning" for "isolated heavy rain thunder lightning with gusty winds 30-40 kmph" on May 23 in J&K. Also a yellow warning for "isolated thunder and lightning isolated thunder and lightning" has been forecast on May 25 and 26.

There are four types of colour codes signifying the level of caution: green which means no action, yellow—situation to be watched, orange—government agencies need to be prepared for severe weather and red—action needed by the agencies.

Regarding temperature, a meteorological department official here said that Srinagar recorded a low of 12.0°C against 9.7°C on the previous night and it was normal for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 8.4°C against 7.6°C on the previous night while the famous hill station of Pahalgam in South Kashmir recorded a low of 5.3°C against 3.6°C on the previous night.

In Kupwara town, he said, the



Kashmir Observer

Mughal Road Reopens For Traffic

SRINAGAR: Mughal road, connecting Poonch-Rajouri and Shopian districts, reopened for traffic after clearance of landslide debris near Mansar Morh, officials said on Sunday.

The thoroughfare was closed on Saturday afternoon. Subsequently, they said, men and machinery was pressed into services to restore the road for traffic.

DTI Mughal Shoket Amin Khan confirmed to a local news agency GNS the reopening of the thoroughfare for vehicular traffic. He said stranded vehicles and tribal families, struck along with livestock, are moving towards the respective destination.

mercury settled at 8.6°C against 8.3°C on the previous night and it was 1.5°C below normal for the north Kashmir area.

Kokernag recorded a low of 11.1°C against 8.3°C on the previous night and it was 0.5°C above normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 9.0°C against 4.8°C on previous night and it was above normal by 1.9°C for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district,

he said.

Jammu recorded a low of 22.7°C against 22.6°C on the previous night and it was 2.2°C below normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal recorded a low of 11.3°C (below normal by 0.9°C), Batote 15.3°C (0.3°C below normal), Katra 21.0°C (0.6°C below normal) and Bhandarwah 12.4°C (below normal by 1.3°C). Ladakh's Leh and Kargil recorded a low of 2.6°C and 6.8°C respectively, he said.

bair Nazeer Malik, Head of the Department of Public Administration, who gave a brief detail about the theme. Prof. Tafazul Hussain, Department of Political Science, delivered a special lecture on the significance of G20.

He said that this forum is more representative as compared to other existing organizations as it is a fine mix of developed and developing countries. Hence, as an organization G20 can be more effective in global economic and

financial cooperation, as it can ensure policy framework and implementation strategies.

Prof. Tafazul added that, for India, G20 presidency is a great opportunity to showcase its soft power capabilities and its leadership credentials to the world. During the session, the students posed a lot of questions to the speaker and got positive responses. The session was very interactive and the faculty members also took part in the question answer session.

J&K Cong Starts Campaign For Panchayat Polls

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The Jammu and Kashmir unit of the Congress on Sunday launched its campaign for the forthcoming panchayat elections in the Union territory.

The launch of the campaign coincided with the 32nd death anniversary of former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi who, the party said, was the architect of the panchayati raj system in the country.

Panchayat and urban local bodies in the Union territory are completing their five-year terms between November 5 and January 9, 2024. The election schedule is yet to be announced.

Launching the campaign, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president Vikar Rasool Wani exhorted the workers to gear up for the local body elections.

The winds of change have started blowing in the country from Karnataka, where the Congress won the just-con-

cluded assembly polls, following the successful Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Rahul Gandhi, he said.

"Every true Congress supporter should be ready to respond to the call of the party high command as a disciplined soldier and unitedly fight to bring the Congress back to the power to serve the people and defeat the politics of hate and division," Wani said.

Paying rich tribute to the former prime minister, the Congress leader said he was the architect of the panchayati raj system in the country.

He transferred the power to people at the grassroots level, Wani said.

Accusing the BJP of snatching the democratic rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir by downgrading the state and by not holding elections to the assembly for five years, Wani said, "Our struggle for the restoration of statehood and early holding of the assembly elections will be intensified."

BJP Not Ready To Face Assembly Elections In J&K: Bukhari

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari on Sunday alleged the assembly elections in the Union Territory are being delayed as the BJP does not want to face the 'angry' voters.

"There is growing public anguish against the Union Territory (UT) administration for being directly controlled by the BJP. The party does not want to face the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir because of misgovernance. Therefore, the polls are being delayed without any justification," he said.

Addressing a workers meeting at Mongri in Udhampur district, Bukhari said the administration has failed to do

justice with the people with regard to their development, employment and other issues.

He said growing unemployment and unaddressed issues of education and health sectors in Mongri and Panchari regions have given rise to "anti-administration sentiments".

Bukhari, however, said if his party forms the next government, it will issue white papers with regard to development in every district to ensure equitable development.



'Nagar Diwas' Programme Held At Dooru, Anantnag

Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: Continuing the public outreach initiative of LG Administration, Nagar Diwas was today organized by District Administration Anantnag in collaboration with Municipal Committee Dooru-Verinag at Dooru, here.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, SF Hamid presided over the event.

It is important to mention that "Nagar Diwas" initiative was recently launched by the District Administration Anantnag to ensure continuous and institutionalized coordination between the line Departments and Urban local bodies for facilitating speedy development and enhancing urban governance.

The participants thanked the Govt. for the large number of urban developmental works

initiated in the last few years that was possible because of large scale funding and autonomy to urban local bodies.

During the program, the elected members, local traders, and prominent citizens raised various demands for further improvement in the infrastructure and facilities for businesses in the area.

The participants also put forth their demands pertaining to the preservation and development of religious sites and cultural heritage in Dooru -Verinag area.

DC acknowledged the demands and issues raised by the participants. He assured them that their genuine demands shall be given due consideration, and efforts will be made to address them as District Administration was committed to ensure the holistic development of Dooru - Verinag area.

CAUSE - GHSS Satoora Hold Awareness Session At Tral

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Concerned About Universal Social Empowerment (CAUSE) in collaboration with government higher secondary school Satoora organized a day long counselling cum awareness session at Tral in which students were made aware about the ill effects of drug abuse.

The event was held with District drug de addiction centre Pulwama under the scheme of DDAC Pulwama. The session was attended by students from class 9th to 12th and attended by the faculty of the school also. Mr Amir Suhail, Tehsildar of Arpal, Tral was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Mr. Arshid - Resource Person on the occasion underlined the need for awareness amongst student community regarding drug abuse and access to relevant information regarding it's the ill effects.

Noted Counselor and Patron for CAUSE - Mr. Zubair Rashid highlighted the role of cause in eradicating the drug menace within the society and sought the help of civil society in this

initiative.

Showket Shafi noted academic , Counselor and Life Coach spoke on the theme "Life is Whatever our Thought Make It" and stressed the need for positive thinking and right approach to problems for a happier life. He quoted from numerous writers and said " Right thinking is the only way to happier life"

Earlier Mr. Riyaz Ahmad Mir, Principal of Hr. Secondary School, Tral in his welcome address thanked the CAUSE for organising what he termed as a fruitful event and hoped the NGO to hold such events in the future within the institution.

Dr. Fazal - DM, De-addiction Consultant GMC, Srinagar - In his detailed interaction with students talked about various issues related to drug abuse. He advised the participants to be in good company and never to fall prey to drug abuse of any kind. He also talked about the physiological and psychological effects of various psychotropic drugs. He also interacted with the students and responded to their queries.

G20: Sports Events Continue Across Kashmir Valley

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Sports activities to commemorate the G-20 event continued in various play fields of Kashmir Valley.

Water sports competitions organised by J&K Sports Council saw more than hundred players participate in the disciplines of Canoe Sprint, Canoe Slalom, Rowing and Water-Skiing.

A cricket match to commemorate the foreign delegates was also played in Srinagar's downtown. The match was played under lights between Gani Reds XI and Gani Blues XI in the Gani Memorial Stadium Srinagar.

A Taekwondo Championship was held at Bakshi Stadium in which more than 110 athletes participated.

In another cricket match between trainees of Sports Council Cricket Academy and Valiant XI, the former trounced their opponents by a huge margin of 193 runs in what turned out to be a one-sided affair.

Batting first, Sports Council Cricket Academy amassed 248 runs for the loss of 6 wickets in their allotted quota of 20 overs. Noumaan with a score of 93 runs in 51 balls was the top scorer, while Arsalan scored 56 runs in just 20 balls and Abid smashed 47 runs in 19.

Chasing a mammoth total, the innings of Valiant XI folded like a pack of cards and managed to score 55 runs and were bundled out within 10 overs. Omer and Abid claimed 4 wickets each.

Inter District Athletic Meet Begins At Charar-i-Sharif



Observer News Service

BUDGAM: District Youth Services and Sports Officer Budgam, Balbir Singh along with Deputy Superintendent of Police, Charar-i-Sharif, inaugurated a Provincial Level Inter District Athletic Boys U-19 Competitions on Sunday at Shiekh-ul-Alam Khel Maidan, Charar-i-Sharif here.

The inaugural ceremony of the tournament began with the Pledge to keep society free from drugs. While speaking to participants, the DYSP said the Drug menace is a curse for youth, society and nation so our youngsters most refrain from such bad habits.

"She appreciated the efforts of DYSSO Budgam for organizing these events in district Budgam. The athletic competitions for players under 19 years age category is considered an exciting and important event in the athletic events as it serves as a platform for young athletes to showcase their skills, gain experience and compete against their peers at regional, national or even international levels," the department said in a statement.

Ten districts are expected to participate in these events. So far, 69 athletes from different districts have successfully participated in different track and field events.

IPL 2023: MI Beat SRH



Press Trust of India

MUMBAI: Cameron Green struck an unbeaten century after uncapped Indian pacer Akash Madhwal's 4/37 as Mumbai Indians secured a comprehensive eight-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

Madhwal's stunning spell at the death saw Sunrisers manage just 32 runs in the last four overs while losing three wickets to post 200/5.

In reply, Mumbai Indians got a perfect start with skipper Rohit Sharma (56 from 37 balls) and Green putting together 128 runs from 65 balls for the second wicket.

After Rohit's departure, Green sealed the chase with 12 balls to spare, staying unbeaten on 100 from 47 balls (8x4, 8x6).

The five-time champions' playoffs fate, however, hinges on the result of the match between Royal Challengers Bangalore and Gujarat Titans in the concluding league match of the season later in the day.

RCB, who have a better run-rate, need a win to seal the fourth spot in the playoffs at the expense of MI.

Earlier, opener Mayank Agarwal returned to form with his first fifty of the IPL to give SRH a perfect start after Rohit Sharma opted to bowl.

Agarwal top-scored for SRH with his 46-ball 83 (8x4, 4x6) in a solid 140-run opening partnership with Vivrant Sharma (69 from 47 balls; 8x4, 4x6). But Madhwal triggered the collapse by dismissing him in the 17th over.

Australia Slight Favourites For WTC Final, Says Ian Chappell

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Ian Chappell feels the potency of Australia's pace attack in English conditions will give them the edge in next month's World Test Championship final against India, who could be "badly affected" by the absence of injured Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant.

Shreyas Iyer and K L Rahul are another two Indian players who have been ruled out of the June 7-11 final due to injuries.

Chappell also said injury-prone Hardik Pandya not playing red-ball cricket also harms India. Hardik last played a first class game in 2018.

"The injuries to Jasprit Bumrah and Rishabh Pant badly affect India, as they would be outright favourites with these two playing."

"The somewhat surprising unavailability of allrounder Hardik Pandya also harms India, as he could have provided them with the final piece of the jigsaw puzzle," Chappell wrote in a column for ESPNcricinfo.



Haaland Big Reason For City's 3rd Straight PL Title

Agencies

Erling Haaland arrived at Manchester City nearly a year ago to questions about how a "battering ram" of a centre-forward would fit into mastermind manager Pep Guardiola's nuanced and tactically demanding style.

But Haaland has since bulldozed his way to several scoring records - and past countless defenders - in an astonishing debut campaign. The striker has quickly become the face of team and a major reason the treble-chasers captured their third consecutive Premier League title on Saturday.

Rooney and Brazil's Ronaldo at their best with Kane's finishing touch, Rooney's power and Ronaldo's explosion.

While City have long garnered praise for the brilliance of their passing, possession and patience in creating chances, Haaland, former England defender Neville said, brought something new, a "battering ram" of a striker with a superb finish. "Haaland is a world star, who has come as a world star and is performing like a world star," Neville said on his podcast earlier this season.

He has certainly proven Neville right, finding the net in dozens of different ways, from



While teamwork is City's cornerstone, the 22-year-old Norwegian international has claimed numerous individual records that Guardiola has called "scary." He owns the record for goals scored in a single Premier League season with 36, breaking the previous mark set by Andy Cole and Alan Shearer that had stood for nearly three decades and was from more games.

His 52 goals across all competitions this season had people looking back almost a century as Dixie Dean's 63 for Everton in 1927/28 briefly looked under threat. Sky Sports pundit Gary Neville recently described Haaland as "truly unique," calling the hulking forward a combination of Harry Kane, Wayne

all angles - and making it look ridiculously easy.

DREAM TREBLE

City are on the cusp of a dream treble, with a spot in the FA Cup final on June 3 versus Manchester United, the only other English team to achieve it, and earlier this week produced a performance for the ages to demolish Real Madrid and reach the Champions League final against Inter Milan on June 10. While Haaland was largely shackled in the first leg of the semi-final against Real and had good efforts turned away by goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois in the second, he has penned his name alongside some Champions League records as well.

Quick eats for busy people

Bun Maska & Chai

Turkish doner kebab

Who Says Healthy Food Can't Taste Good?

BRING YOUR KIDS ALONG

JK BANK LAWNS, NEAR GHAT 6, BOULEVARD-SRINAGAR