

G20 Delegates Pledge To Promote Kashmir Tourism

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: The delegates who arrived to attend 3rd G20 working group meeting in Srinagar, Tuesday hailed India's move to host the major international event in J&K, saying it's the collective job of all international emissaries to promote Kashmir as a top travel destination of the world.

The visiting delegates heaped praises on Kashmir, calling it a paradise on earth in terms of its natural beauty, and promised to promote the region on a global scale to draw in more and more tourists.

Chang Jeebok, a Korean delegate claimed that his country supports India's G20 Presidency and hopes that the joint efforts of both nations will attract Korean tourists to visit Kashmir.

The G20 delegate, while hoping for the grand success of the first significant international event being held in J&K, said 50 years of diplomatic relations between India and Korea will undoubtedly boost travel between the two nations.

"The exchange of cultural activities will increase interest among people in India and Korea. It will take some time but joint efforts of both the countries could attract tourists from Korea to travel to Kashmir," Jeebok told the media on the sidelines of the G20 meeting at SKICC here.

The Korean delegate declined to comment on China's decision to skip the G20 summit, stating that different countries have different opinions on certain subjects.

In response to **More on P6**

J&K Witnessing New Era Of Limitless Possibilities: LG

Says Kashmir Will Soon Find Its Place In Top 50 Destinations In The World



Observer News Service

Srinagar: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Tuesday that Jammu and Kashmir was witnessing a new era that has opened limitless possibilities of growth and peace, and the day is not far when the Union Territory will find its place in the top 50 destinations in the world and will be on the bucket list of global travelers.

Addressing the 3rd Tourism

Working Group (TWG) of G20 at the SKICC here on Tuesday, Sinha said that the development schemes empowering masses and Union Territory's effective administration isolated the "terror ecosystem which thrived with the support from across the border."

"Now even foreign investments are also coming into Jammu and Kashmir, green shoots of better times people are anxiously looking up to," Sinha said and

underlined why J&K was selected by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the G20 meeting.

He also said that tourism in Jammu Kashmir is also a reflection of the multi-religious and multi-cultural ethos of India. The LG underlined the importance of peace for growth and tourism and said that tourism cannot grow in isolation

"The economics of it is fine, that tourism **More on P6**

Terror Eco-System Isolated With Dev Schemes, Effective Administration

Speed To Execute Infra Projects 10 Times Up

300 New Destinations Identified To Promote Green Tourism

Tourism Sector Made 7% Contribution To J&K's GDP

Tourism Cannot Grow In Isolation

Over 300 Movies Filmed In J&K Last Year

'Today's J&K Not A Land Of Hartals Or Stone Pelters'

Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha said on Tuesday that Jammu and Kashmir is no more a land of hartals or stone pelters due to the whole approach adopted by the government to dismantle the ecosystem of terror sponsored by the neighbouring country. "I can confidently say that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Jammu Kashmir is on the move. By adopting the whole government approach, the ecosystem of terror sponsored by our neighbour has been almost dismantled. Schools and colleges remain open allowing youth to focus on career building. Today's Jammu Kashmir is not a land of hartals or stone pelters," Sinha said. Addressing a news conference here, Sinha said that he has been informed that the ongoing 3rd Tourism Working Group Meeting in Srinagar is the biggest gathering of foreign delegates so far. "I think it is bigger than previous TWG meetings in Siliguri and **More on P6**

THE WORLD CAN SEE THAT THE ENTIRE SOCIETY, especially the young generation is scripting a bright future for themselves and the nation. The speed and scale of rapid development in Jammu Kashmir are awe-inspiring. Our speed to execute infrastructure projects has gone up almost 10 times."

'Promoting Incredible India Through Film Tourism' Singh Calls For Ease Of Film Making, Upgrading Studios

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Union Minister of State Dr Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of Culture, Tourism and the Development of the North Eastern Region, G Kishan Reddy Tuesday addressed the side event on the theme "Promoting Incredible India through Film Tourism" on the sidelines of 3rd Tourism Working Group Meeting.

The side event was also attended by Secretary Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India, Apurva Chandra.

The side event on Tourism was aimed at furthering the scope of the film tourism sector and highlighting all the aspects of Incredible India.

During the event, Singh said that India has no dearth of talent having the century old film legacy with leading names

of Guru Dutt and Satyajit Ray who have been acknowledged for their art work despite no avenues and facilities.

He hoped that the business community will help in scaling up the efforts already taken by the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of I&B. The Minister said ease of film making and up gradation of the existing studios has to be pursued rigorously to support the film industry.

"Liberalisation of state regulations has to be taken up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to encourage film making throughout India," he added.

During the event, G. Kishan Reddy said tourism has the greatest ability to generate overall employment especially among the vulnerable communities. "Film production can have **More on P6**

Srinagar Blend Of Traditional Heritage, Modern Infra: Singh



Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: The significance of holding a G20 meeting in Srinagar is that the city is a strange blend of traditional heritage and modern infrastructure with cutting-edge technology, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said here on Tuesday.

Addressing the inaugural session of the third tourism working

group meeting of the G20 countries at the SKICC here, Singh, the minister of state in the prime minister's office, said India is ready to share the global responsibility as far as its obligation towards the economy, environment, and society is concerned.

"Today, when we meet in the scenic spot of Srinagar, we have this deep realisation within us that we are all **More on P6**

China's Loss, Not India's In Skipping G20 Meet'

China not attending the G20 meeting in Srinagar does not make any difference and it is their loss, not India's, Union minister Jitendra Singh said on Tuesday. Delegates of all G20 countries, barring China, arrived in Srinagar on Monday to attend the third G20 tourism working group meeting. "That (China not attending the meeting) does not make any difference. China not coming is China's loss, not India's," Singh told PTI on the sidelines of the G20 meet here. Asked if Beijing's abstention was linked to the eastern Ladakh border standoff, Singh **More on P6**

53 Foreign Delegates Participate in Srinagar Meet



Observer News Service

Srinagar: As many 53 foreign delegates from G-20 nations, invitee countries and multilateral organizations are participating in the G20 Tourism Working Group meeting currently underway in Srinagar, sources disclosed.

Fifty three delegates including 46 from G-20 and invitee countries and seven from multilateral organisations, are taking part in the high-profile event being held in SKICC here.

Details reveal that five foreign delegates who are arrived here are from Singapore, four each from United Kingdom and Nigeria, three each from USA, Australia, Canada and Spain, two each from Brazil, France, Mauritius, South Korea, South Africa and United Arab Emirates and one each from Argentina, Bangladesh, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands and Russia.

According to sources, seven delegates are from the European **More on P6**

16 Candidates from J&K Crack UPSC Exam

Youth From Anantnag Secures 7th Rank

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Nearly sixteen candidates from Jammu and Kashmir have cracked the prestigious Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examination, the results of which were announced on Tuesday.

The candidates who cracked the exams include Waseem Ahmad Bhat (rank 07) Parnjeet Kaur (rank 11), Nittin Singh (rank 32), Naveed Ahsan Bhat (rank 84), Ambika Raina (rank 164), Navneet Singh (rank 191), Manan Bhat (rank 231), Arjun Gupta (rank 228), Manil Bejotra



(rank 314), Dwarika Gandhi (rank 505), Irfan Choudhary (rank 476), Anjeet Singh (rank 565), Abhinandan Singh (rank 749), Nimranshu Hans (rank 811), Iram Choudhary (rank 852) and Aadesh Basnotra (rank 888). Waseem Ahmad Bhat from Anantnag has secured the seventh rank in the UPSC civil services examination. Waseem, a resident of Dooru

Shahabad had secured the 225th rank last year.

"My son had qualified for the exam last year. Previously, his rank was 225 but now it is seven. I am delighted. It is an inspiring and happy news for Anantnag as well as Kashmir. We are all very thankful to God," Waseem Ahmad Bhat's father, Mohammad Yusuf Bhat, said.

He said the family always wanted him to become an IAS officer. "Today, God has fulfilled all our wishes," Mohammad Yusuf Bhat said.

He asserted that his son worked very hard for the exams and excelled even though the family's financial condition is not sound.

"His hard work and dedication helped him achieve success," the father said. Meanwhile, Lieutenant **More on P6**

Hard Work & Family Support Were Key: Waseem

Waseem Ahmad Bhat, a resident of Bragram village of Dooru-Shahabad in south Kashmir's Anantnag district said his hard work and dedication yielded results. "I am very happy with my performance. My aim is to serve the public because we are public servants," he said. Bhat dedicated the achievement to all those who supported him unconditionally. In 2015, he cracked the Joint Entrance Examination and got admission to the National **More on P6**

FOUR POINT AGENDA

Ladakh Parties Ready For Unconditional Talks With Centre

Auqib Javed

Srinagar: Softening their stand on engagement with New Delhi over their four-point agenda, the Leh Apex Body (LAB) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) on Tuesday expressed their willingness to resume dialogue process with the Centre without any pre-conditions.

The decision to resume talks with the Centre was taken in an emergency meeting attended by prominent members of both the organisations at Ashuna resort, Kargil. The meeting also extended support to the 10-day fast announced by renowned educationist Sonam Wangchuk on the four-point agenda.

Addressing a joint press conference at Kargil on

Tuesday, the two major apex bodies said they were always ready for dialogue but the Government of India wasn't in a mood to address their issues.

"We are ready for talks with the Centre, whether at the level of home minister or his deputy. We want to convey to the Government of India and the people of the country that we will never shy away from the dialogue. We will send representatives whenever we get an invite from the Govt of India," Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA) co-chairperson Asgar Ali Karbalai told reporters.

However, he added that the four-point agenda for Ladakh safeguards remains the core issue for the two parties.

"The promises made by BJP weren't **More on P6**

Rains In Plains, Snowfall On Higher Reaches Predicted

Agencies

Srinagar: Weather department on Tuesday forecast widespread rains in plains and "moderate to heavy snowfall" over higher reaches in Jammu and Kashmir till May 26.

The meteorological department here also issued "yellow weather warning (be aware)" during May 23-26.

"Rain / Thunderstorms are very likely to commence at most places from late afternoon onwards (today)," a meteorological department official here said.

He said there is possibility of widespread light to moderate rain/thunder/lightning with possibility of hailstorm and strong gusty winds at few places.

"There is a possibility of moderate to heavy snowfall possible over higher reaches," he said.

From May 27-29, he said, there is a possibility of partly to generally cloudy weather.

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 the probable impacts of the weather system, he said, there is possibility of overflowing of local nallahs (rivers), especially low lying ones, water logging in low lying areas and damage due to hailstorm and lightning in some places.

"There is possibility of temporary disruption of surface transportation, especially Srinagar-Jammu highway, Zojila, Mughal Road, Srinthar Top etc."

Regarding temperature, the meteorological department official said that Srinagar recorded a low of 14.8°C against 13.0°C on the previous night and it was 3.1°C **More on P6**

Study Examines Coastal Ecosystems Globally As Potential Greenhouse Gas Sinks

Press Trust Of India

Researchers have showed that coastal ecosystems globally are a net greenhouse gas sink for carbon dioxide (CO2), but emissions of methane (CH4) and nitrous oxide (N2O) counteract some of the CO2 consumption by these sinks.

From tropical lagoons to polar fjords, from coastal mangrove forests to underwater seagrass communities, many coastlines around the world show high diversity in greenhouse gas sinks and emissions.

The international team of researchers, led by Australia's Southern Cross University, said that understanding how and where greenhouse gases are released and absorbed in coastal ecosystems was an important first step to implement effective climate mitigation strategies.

"For example, protecting and restoring mangrove and salt marsh habitats is a promising strategy to strengthen the CO2 uptake by these coastal wetlands," said lead

researcher Judith Rosentreter, Senior Research Fellow at Southern Cross University.

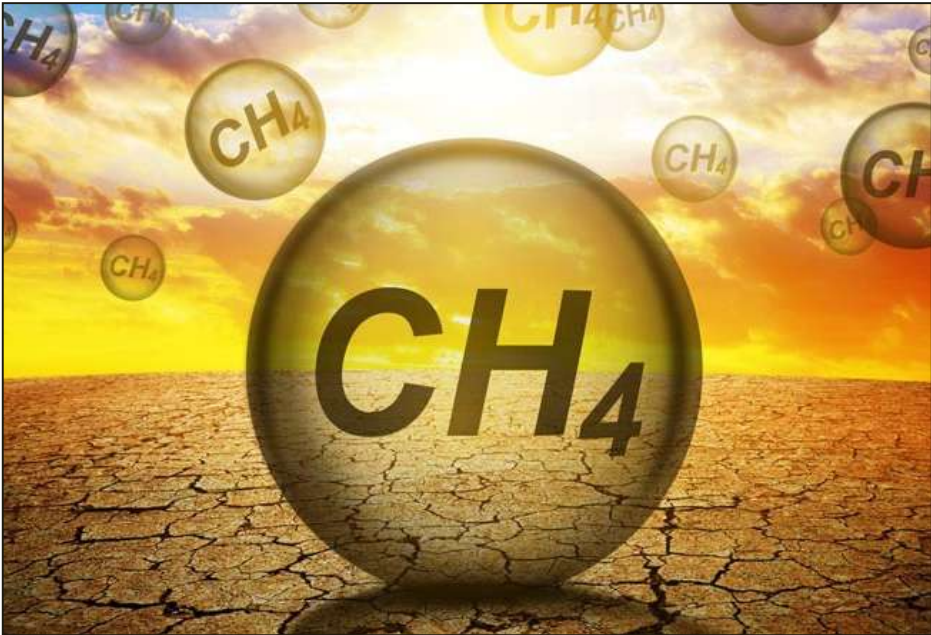
Other activities to curb human impact, like reducing nutrients, organic matter, and wastewater inputs into coastal waterways, could reduce the amount of CH4 and N2O released to the atmosphere, the researchers said.

The findings of the coastal greenhouse gas balance (CO2 + CH4 + N2O) in ten world regions and globally are outlined in a paper published in the journal Nature Climate Change.

The researchers looked at ten different world regions: North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Russia, West Asia, South Asia, East Asia, Southeast Asia and Australasia.

"In our new study, we show that when we consider all three greenhouse gases (CO2 + CH4 + N2O), eight out of the 10 world regions are a coastal net greenhouse gas sink," Rosentreter said.

They found the strongest coastal greenhouse gas (GHG) sink was in Southeast Asia because of its extensive and



productive tropical coastal wetlands that take up CO2.

A second sink hotspot was found to

be North America, with its large areas of coastal wetlands but also CO2-uptaking fjords. A fjord is a long narrow inlet of the

sea between steep cliffs.

The research also showed that fjords around the world take up about 40 per cent of CO2 that would otherwise be released from tidal systems, deltas and lagoons.

"Most (86 per cent) of this important CO2 uptake by fjords comes from the North America region, mostly Greenland," said co-author Bradley Eyre, professor of Biogeochemistry at Southern Cross University.

"Other coastal habitats are sources of greenhouse gases. For example, coastal wetlands such as mangrove forests, coastal salt marshes and seagrasses, release more than three-times more CH4 than all estuaries in the world," said Rosentreter.

At the same time, the researchers said, coastal wetlands, also called coastal 'blue carbon' wetlands, can be strong sinks of CO2 and some also take up N2O, which, on balance, makes them a net greenhouse gas sink for the atmosphere when all three greenhouse gases are considered.



WHY TO USE CRITICAL CARE AMBULANCE

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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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PUBLIC NOTICE

My name and Parentage in my passport bearing No: K5575808 has been wrongly written as Ab Qayoom Dar S/o Gh Mohd Dar while my correct name & parentage is Abdul Qayoom Dar S/o Ghulam Mohd Dar which needs to be corrected. If anybody having any objection in this regard he/she may file his/her objection in the office of the Regional Passport Office Srinagar within a period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained.

Abdul Qayoom Dar
S/O Ghulam Mohd Dar
R/O Zawoora Shopian

fko

BefOre The Hon'ble Court Of Principla District Judge At Srinagar

The Case of
M/S Baba Chemicals Through its proprietor Amir Khan Batla
S/O Gulla Batla R/O Bemina Srinagar

- Caveator

Versus
1) Geology and Mining Department,
Sanath Ghar Bemina Srinagar
2) District Mineral Officer, Baramulla
3) Wild life warden, Sopore Baramulla.

.....Non-Caveators

IN The Matter Of:
Caveat Petition, in terms of section 148-A CPC with respect to proposed appeal / proceedings those may be filled by the non caveators.

May it please your Honor:-
The caveator most humbly state and submit as under.-
1) That Hon'ble Court of Sub Judge (Forest Magistrate) Srinagar has passed an order on 19-05-2023 in a Civil suit titled M/S Baba Chemicals vs UT & ors by virtue of which the non-caveators/ defendants were directed to allow the caveator to extract Gypsum in his leasehold area at Salamabad Dachina.

2. That the Caveator apprehends that non-caveators may file an Appeal / other proceedings before this Court against order dated 19-05-2023 passed by Sub Judge (Forest Magistrate) Srinagar & may try to get some ex-parte order.

3. That a copy of this Caveat has been dispatched/ Published in newspaper & Newspaper cutting is enclosed with this petition.

4. That this application is supported by an affidavit.

On the premise, it is therefore prayed that, in the event of filing of any Appeal / other proceedings by non- caveators against the caveator with respect to order dated 19-05-2023 passed by Sub Judge (Forest Magistrate) Srinagar, the caveators be put on notice before passing of any order.

Caveator Through Counsel
Adv Fayaz Ahmad Mir

NJ

From The Court Of Principal District Judge, Srinagar

Present : Mr. Jawad Ahmad

Aijaz Ahmad Bakshi S/O Noor Mohammad Bakshi R/o Hilal Abad Sector No -03 Qamarwari Sgr

1. Mukhtar Ahmad Brother aged 60 years S/o Bakshi Noor Mohammad Present Fair Banks Colony Rawalpura

2. Fayaz Ahmad (Brother aged 55 years) S/o Bakshi Noor Mohammad

3. Shafqat Ara 9Sister aged 56 years) D/o Bakshi Noor Mohammad Residents of Hilal Abad Sector No. 03 Qamarwari Sgr

In the matter of
Application for appointment of Guardina for the person and property of Minor(s)

Notice to public at Large

Where the petitioners(s) Filed Above Titled Petiton Before This Court For appointment of guardian the person and property of minor(s) namely Basharat Ahamd S/O Bakshi Noor Ahmad R/o Hilal Abad SECTOR No 03 Qamarwari Sgr . The petition is pending disposal before this court and the next date of hearing is fixed 14-06-2023 3

Public Notice is hereby issued, informing all and sundry through the medium of this proclamation that at any anyone has any objection , he/she / they shall appear before this court either personally or through counsel or any authorized agent and file objections on or before ----Failing which the petition will be taken up and appropriate orders will be passed in the same

In case, the date fixed is declared as holiday the matter shall be taken on the next working day.

Given under my hand and seal of this court on --

Jawad Ahmad
nj Principal District Judge, Srinagar



Photojournalist Falls Into Open Pit At Lal Chowk, Loses Eyesight

Majid Nabi

Srinagar: A photojournalist working for a local newspaper lost his eyesight and suffered critical injuries to other body parts, after he fell into an uncovered pit while documenting a photo feature for Srinagar Smart City at Lal Chowk late last evening.

Bilal Ahmad, a photojournalist who works for local news daily, in addition to injuries to other body parts, lost vision in his left eye and suffered critical injuries to right one after he fell into an open pit at Lal Chowk.

Hailing from Sopore area in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, Bilal was on an assignment to cover night view of Smart City, when the incident took place.

"I was on an official assignment when I suddenly

fell into an uncovered pit near Biscoe School while clicking pictures for Smart City. I am grateful to a man who came to my rescue and pulled me out of the pit," said Bilal, adding some of my colleagues also rushed to the spot later.

He said the man who rescued him with the help of his colleagues took him to the SMHS hospital where he was discharged after receiving seven stitches in ear.

The injured photojournalist said that his family this morning took him to the eye hospital, wherein doctors told him that his left eye was completely damaged in the incident.

"The doctors said that I have completely lost vision in my left eye besides I cannot see from my right eye as well. My camera and the cell phone were also damaged in the incident," he added.

Missing Up Boy Case

Child Rights Group Raids Placement Agency At Rambagh

Observer News Service

Srinagar: A child rights protection group in Srinagar on Tuesday raided a placement agency in connection with the disappearance of a 17-year-old boy from Madhya Pradesh.

A senior member of the Child Welfare Committee, Srinagar, Beenish said acting upon a specific complaint received through a mail on Tuesday morning about the missing boy, they raided a placement agency in Srinagar's Rambagh area where they came to know that the boy was placed for domestic work at a government official's residence.

"We received an email communication regarding the missing 17-year-old boy from Madhya Pradesh today morning and during our inquiry, we came to know that the missing minor boy has been placed at the residence of some government official," she said.

We are in contact with the father of the missing boy as he has been told by

the agency and the person who had taken him that his missing son will be handed over to him at Jammu, Beenish said.

"Although the placement agency is registered with the J&K Labour Department; as of now, we have seized their records for the purpose of inquiry," the CWC member said.

She said that upon receiving such complaints, they take cognizance of the matter and initiate inquiries. "Then we start tracing the parents or guardians for the repatriation process," she said. Beenish said the Child Welfare Committee, which works under the Mission Vatsalya, files cases against the accused involved in the trafficking of minors.

Earlier in the day, a video went viral on social media in which the members of the child rights group were seen asking the placement agency for documents as well as claiming that the child had called for help to get him released from the residence of a government official where he was taken as a domestic helper.

DLSA Srinagar Organizes Awareness Program At GHSS Khanyar

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As part of calendar of activities issued by J&K Legal Services Authority Srinagar, the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, under the aegis of NALSA and J&K State Legal Services Authority Srinagar/Jammu in collaboration with the Govt. Hr. Sec.

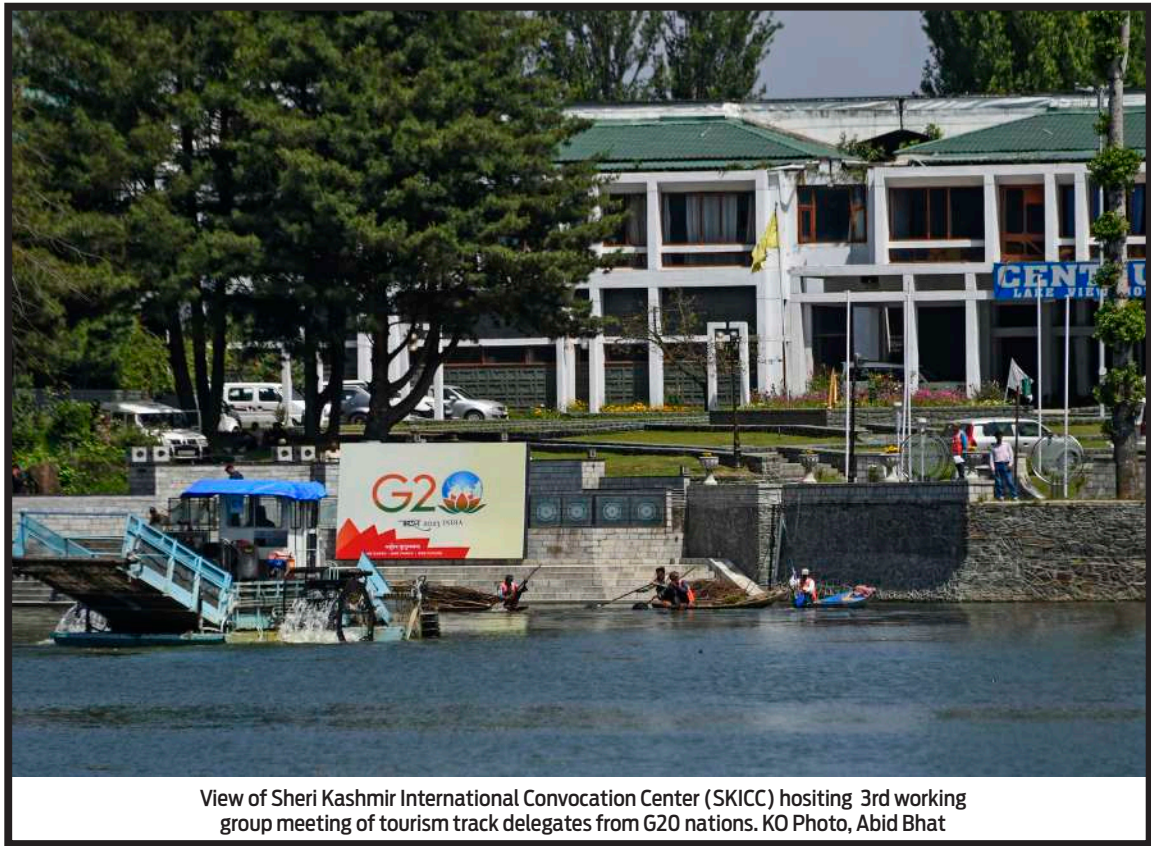
School (GHSS) Khanyar Srinagar today organized an awareness program to raise awareness about the Domestic Violence Act and Dowry Prohibition Act.

With a strong commitment to combating these social evils, the awareness program was organized to educate, empower, and foster change within the community.

DEMISE

With profound grief, we inform the demise of Mohammad Yousuf Sheikh S/o Late Noor Mohammad Sheikh R/o Chunkral Mohalla Habba Kadal at present Gung Bugh near General Wari Tengpora on 23rd of May 2023 (Tuesday). May Almighty Allah grant Jannat ul Firdous to the departed soul. Mourning will be held for three days only.
Ladies are requested not to bring any kind of eatables with them.

BEREAVED
Farooq Ahmad Sheikh (Son)
Mohammad Shafiq Mir (Son-in-Law)
Bashir Ahmad (Brother)
Mehraj ud Din Bafanda
Javid Ahmad Bhat, Abdul Rashid Gadyari
9419055142, 6006300132, 9596000200



View of Sheri Kashmir International Convocation Center (SKICC) hosting 3rd working group meeting of tourism track delegates from G20 nations. KO Photo, Abid Bhat

AC Okays Absorption Of 145 Centaur Hotel Employees Into JKTDC, JKCC, SKICC

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Administrative Council (AC) which met here under Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha gave approval to the absorption of 145 Employees of Hotel Corporation of India Limited (HCIL) working at Centaur Lake view Hotel, Srinagar, in different corporations under the Tourism Department.

Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor;

Dr. Arun Kumar Mehta, Chief Secretary, J&K; and Dr. Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor attended the meeting.

The decision was taken on the recommendations of the committee that the existing staff of the Hotel Corporation of India Limited will be absorbed by the UT of J&K on the existing terms and conditions while the payment of retirement gratuity and other benefits of the employees for the period they worked with HCI will

be borne by HCI.

The Hotel Corporation of India has 145 permanent employees of Centaur Lake View Hotel as on 01.05.2023 which will be absorbed on existing terms and conditions in Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation Ltd, Jammu and Kashmir Cable Car Corporation Ltd and Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre, Srinagar, as per their requirement and absorptive capacity to be determined by the Tourism Department.

Youth Set Up Tents To Accommodate, Guide Tourists Visiting Wular Lake

Observer News Service

Srinagar: In response to the growing number of tourists flocking to the Wular banks, local youth have set up tents with the purpose of providing accommodation and guidance to visitors at the famed lake which stands as "one of the largest freshwater lakes" in South Asia.

Following the construction

of gazebos and selfie points by the Wular Conservation Management Authority (WUCUMA) along the banks of "Asia's second-largest freshwater lake", tourist visits have witnessed a significant increase in recent months.

An official said the initiative aims to elevate the overall visitor experience and highlight the scenic beauty of the area. "Taking advan-

tage of this development, local youths have stepped up by setting up tents, offering comfortable accommodation choices for tourists," he said.

With the addition of these tents, we anticipate a surge in tourists who will now have convenient accommodation options, enabling them to explore and immerse themselves in the wonders of the Wular Lake, Mushtaq Ahmad, a local said.

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- PATTAN: 01954-293507
- QAZIGUND: 01951-296153

HIGHWAY STATUS

Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
Mughal Road - (Open)
Srinagar-Leh- (Open)

HIJRI CALENDAR

03 Zil-Qadah
1444

PRAYERS

FAJR	3:45
ZUHR	12:28
ASR	5:24
Magrib	7:35
ISHA	9:11

This Day In History

- 1153- Malcolm IV becomes King of Scots
- 1218 -The Fifth Crusade leaves Acre for Egypt.
- 1370-Hanzesteden signs peace treaty with Danish king Waldemar IV
- 1595- Nomenclator of Leiden University Library appears, the first printed catalog of an institutional library.
- 1621- The Protestant Union is formally dissolved.
- 1658-Battle of Dunes (Spanish-French War) fought
- 1667- French troops attack into Southern Netherlands
- 1689 - English Parliament guarantees freedom of religion for Protestants
- 1697 - English King William III travels through northern Europe
- 1738 - John Wesley is converted, launching the Methodist movement; celebrated annually by Methodists as Aldersgate Day
- 1775 - John Hancock is unanimously elected President of the Continental Congress
- 1798 - Irish Rebellion of 1798 led by the United Irishmen against British rule begins
- 1809 - Dartmoor Prison opens to house French prisoners of war
- 1815- George Evans discovers Lachlan River, Australia
- 1818- General Andrew Jackson captures Pensacola Florida
- 1822- Battle of Pichincha, Bolivar secures independence of Quito from Spain
- 1832-The First Kingdom of Greece is declared in the London Conference.
- 1846- General Zachary Taylor captures Monterey in Mexican War
- 1861- Alexandria, VA occupied by Federal troops
- 1862- Beardslee field telegraph used for 1st time
- 1881- Turkey cedes Thessaly and Arta back to Greece.
- 1887- Sultan Bargash of Zanzibar grants E Afr Association at East African harbors
- 1890- Geo Train & Sam Wall circle world in record 67 days, Tacoma-Tacoma
- 1915- Thomas Edison invents telescribe to record telephone conversations
- 1916- Last British-Indian contract workers arrive in Suriname
- 1918- British officer General Poole lands at Murmansk, the Russian port on the Barents Sea

From KO Archives

600 Kanal Kah-Charai 'Gifted' To Ikhwanis

Observer News Service

SOPORE- Revenue officials in Bandipore tehsil have blessed a virtual loot of kah-charai (grazing) lands belonging to the village community in several villages of Bandipore tehsil. At the behest of some high-ups, authorities are reported to have allotted' hundreds of kanals of such land to Ikhwani counter-insurgents during recent times.

According to reports, 500 to 600 kanals of the grazing land on Kuil Gurdal road and Baji road in Malangam had been 'gifted' to the Ikhwanis of Malangam village by revenue officials. The beneficiaries' indude Abdul Rahman Khan, Moli Khan Chandi Khan and Sher Dil, all of Malangam. They have raised their houses on the lands and even sold portions of them. The tehsildar, Bandipore has allegedly made the allotments.

Reports said the tehsildar also allegedly allotted a custodian building in the tehsil complex at Bandipore to a ruling National Conference halqa president, Muhammad Muzaffar Malik of Onagam. He demolished the building and raised his own residential house in the sspremises under the tehsildar's nose. The tehsildar, reports alleged, had the temerity to attest the mutations of the grazing lands as well as the building.

Villages that witnessed the virtual plunder of the grazing lands include Kuil, Mangnipora, Aloosa, Gurdal, Malangam and Kema. The people of these areas have expressed grave concern over the loot and urged the authorities to call an immediate halt to the murky deals. They also demanded a probe into the allotments made by the tehsildar so far.

(Kashmir Observer, 24 May, 2000)

KASHMIR OBSERVER[™]

Wednesday | 24-05-2023

Uniting Opposition

In an ongoing bid to foster opposition unity ahead of the 2024 general elections, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who has volunteered to act as the interlocutor, held crucial meetings with Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi in Delhi on Monday. The objective of these meetings was to finalize a date for a grand opposition gathering, probably in Patna, which had been in the pipeline even before the recent Karnataka assembly election which Congress won with a thumping majority.

The discussions between the leaders revolved around the prospects of opposition unity. Soon after the meeting, Kharge, in a Hindi tweet, said: "Now the country will be united." He said that they had discussed the current political situation with the Chief Minister of Bihar Nitish Kumar and taking forward "the process of giving a new direction to the country."

Nitish Kumar has been successful thus far in garnering support from leaders such as Mamata Banerjee, Arvind Kejriwal, and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, all of whom have recognized the need for opposition unity. In recent days, Kumar also met with Arvind Kejriwal and extended his complete support in the ongoing confrontation with the central government over bureaucratic control in the national capital. His meeting with Mamata Banerjee resulted in the formulation of a "One-On-One" strategy, wherein strong regional parties would take on the BJP in their respective regions, while supporting the Congress in the constituencies where the two national parties directly contest each other. Banerjee, who suggested the idea of a mega meeting in Patna, believes that Bihar, historically associated with transformative movements like Jayaprakash Narayan's, would be a suitable venue to chart the future course for the opposition. The recent swearing-in ceremony of Siddaramaiah in Karnataka, attended by prominent opposition leaders including Nitish Kumar, Tejashwi Yadav, Hemant Soren, Sharad Pawar, M K Stalin, and Farooq Abdullah, provided a platform for a display of opposition unity.

Despite his best efforts, Kumar was unable to secure the backing of Naveen Patnaik, the Chief Minister of Odisha, known for offering issue-based support to the ruling BJP.. However Patnaik, at the end of the day, is not important enough, being leader of a small state. If the rest of the opposition is able to stick together, they can confront the BJP with a strong challenge. Karnataka outcome has given some understandable confidence to both the Congress and the wider opposition. But as they say, the devil lies in the details. It remains to be seen whether the unity withstands the need to make sacrifices and the concessions by the different parties. And without such sacrifices it would be a cakewalk for the BJP led by the prime minister Narendra Modi who remains an overarching political figure despite a decade in power.

OTHER OPINION

DeMo's aftershock

The existence of this high-value banknote is patently at odds with the idea of a "less-cash" economy that the government is wedded to. Its printing was stopped in 2018-19. DeMo perhaps satisfied the legal "test of proportionality," as ruled by the Supreme Court in January this year, more than six years after the sudden decision shook and rattled the economy and the public at large. But its financial and human costs have far outweighed the modicum of gains, and have taken many frustrating years to dissipate, causing the economy to take a material hit.

Of course, digital payments have risen at a much faster rate since that abrupt cancellation of the legal-tender status of 86% of cash in circulation (CIC). In more recent years, UPI-enabled digital commerce has seen a scorching pace. However, the CIC too has kept pace with the digital drive, so much so that, not merely in absolute terms but also as a fraction of nominal GDP too, cash hasn't stopped growing as yet. At 34.6 trillion as of March 31, 2023, the CIC stood at 12.7% of GDP for FY23 (second advance estimate), compared with about 18 trillion (11.7%) immediately before DeMo (early November, 2016) and 10.7% in FY16. The CIC peaked at 14.5% of GDP by the end of FY21, but has since fallen. It seems cash no longer changes hands as much as earlier, even as it remains in circulation, a larger portion presumably hoarded.

It may be assumed that, absent DeMo, CIC would have risen further, but the question to be asked is whether cash is indeed the cause of black money, which DeMo sought to whittle down. Or more diligently, is curbing cash transactions the most efficient and cost-effective way of launching an assault on black money? The answer is "No". Also, cash is not necessarily bad or wholly dispensable in an economy, which still has a very large "informal" constituent, populated by a much larger segment of the population, than in the formal category. The journey towards "a less cash economy"—rather than a cash-less economy—is to be welcomed, for the comfort and ease it would bring, but it is hardly an effective remedy for tax evasion.

Financial Express

Asad Mirza

Naqba Day marks the beginning of Palestinians exodus from their homeland, but for the last 75 years the international community has been unable to give the Palestinians their right to their own homeland

On 15th May 2023, for the first time in history, the United Nations 2023 marked the 75th anniversary of the mass displacement of Palestinians known as "the Naqba" or "the Catastrophe". The UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (CEIRPP) commemorated the 75th anniversary of the Naqba at UN Headquarters in New York, pursuant to the mandate by the General Assembly.

Naqba's History

Until the end of WWI, Palestine was under Turkish rule as part of the Ottoman Empire. Later it came under the British control, the so-called British Mandate. The period, under the British - was marked by growing anti-Semitism in Europe - which led to an increasing number of Jews from around the world moving to Palestine, which to them was their ancestral homeland, Eretz Israel, the Promised Land by God, where Jews had always been living, though in much smaller numbers.

Post-Holocaust in Nazi Germany, a United Nations-led Partition Plan for Palestine was adopted by the UN General Assembly. The Arab League rejected the plan, but the Jewish Agency for Palestine accepted it. On May 14, 1948, the State of Israel was proclaimed.

As a reaction, a coalition of five Arab states declared war against the new state, but was eventually defeated by Israel in 1949. Before the war, between 200,000 and 300,000 Palestinians had already left or were forced out from Palestine and during the fighting, a further 300,000 to 400,000 Palestinians were displaced. The overall figure is estimated to be around 700,000 people.

During the war, more than 400 Arab villages were destroyed. While human rights violations were committed on both sides, the massacre of Deir Yassin - a village on the road between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem - is particularly engraved in Palestinian memory to this day. At least 100 people were killed, including women and children. It triggered widespread fear among Palestinians and prompted many to flee their homes.

By the end of the war, Israel held around 40% of the area initially earmarked for the Palestinians by the UN partition plan of 1947.

Then-Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat coined the term "Naqba Day" in 1998. He set the date as the official day for the commemoration of the loss of the Palestinian homeland.

Palestinian Migration

Most of the Palestinians ended up as stateless refugees in neighbouring Arab countries, only a minority moved further abroad. Until today, only a fraction of the next-generation Palestinians have applied for or received other citizenships. As a result, the vast majority of the currently around 6.2 million Palestinians in the Middle East have remained stateless into the third or fourth generation.

According to the UN's Palestinian refugee agency, UNRWA, most Palestinians in the region still live in refugee camps, which over time have transformed into refugee towns. They are mainly based in the Gaza Strip, in the Occupied West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and East Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, UNRWA has not been able to get full support from the western nations for fulfilling its mandate. To date, UNRWA has only received less than 25 per cent of its financial requirements, or US\$ 364 million and still needs US\$ 1.3 billion. At the beginning of

English Trivia

During the 16th and 17th centuries, both Queen Elizabeth and William Shakespeare were instrumental in influencing the English language's path of progress. Significantly, the Bible was one of the major translated and printed books to circulate during their time, which brought the church's language to the commoner. During their period, Latin was still considered a language of the educated and the crème de la crème, and therefore, numerous texts needed to be translated from Latin into English to reach out to a mass audience. In fact, some words came straight from

Latin, such as, focus, lens, nausea, and genius, while words like horrid, frugal, arbit, atmosphere were altered. Interestingly, suffixes 'ize' and 'ism' were also added to the English language during their period. If one person who changed and took the English language to dizzying heights, it was unquestionably Shakespeare. His works contributed significantly to the standardization of the grammar, spelling and vocabulary of this beautiful language. Through his immense ability to create original words, Shakespeare is said to have invented some 2,000 words. Few examples:

eyeballs, homicide, brittle, lonely, gloomy, and majestic. Further, Shakespeare coined some phrases that are still in use today. They are: 'out of thin air', 'as luck would have it', and 'fool's paradise.' Prior to and during Shakespeare's time, the grammar and rules of English were not standardized. But once Shakespeare's plays became popular, they helped contribute to the standardization of the English language, with many Shakespearean words and phrases becoming embedded in the language, particularly through projects, such as Samuel Johnson's A Dictionary of the English Lan-

guage which quoted Shakespeare more than any other writer.

As for the growth of English in India, the British East India Company introduced the English language in our country in the 17th century. As a result of British colonialism, English was considered the governing language, and is still in vogue due to India's heterogeneous languages. And today, India has approximately 125 million English speakers!

Ranganathan Sivakumar



Feature image caption: Palestinians participate in rally marking last year's anniversary of what the Palestinians call the "Naqba," in front of the UNESCO offices in Gaza City.

Adel Hana/AP

Most of the Palestinians ended up as stateless refugees in neighbouring Arab countries, only a minority moved further abroad. Until today, only a fraction of the next-generation Palestinians have applied for or received other citizenships. As a result, the vast majority of the currently around 6.2 million Palestinians in the Middle East have remained stateless into the third or fourth generation

the year, UNRWA appealed for US\$ 1.6 billion in support of its programmes, operations and emergency response across Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank (including East Jerusalem), the Gaza Strip and Jordan.

Over the years, the Agency has put in place several measures to utilise the very little financial contributions it received from donors.

What is the Palestinian right to return?

According to the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948, as well as the UN Resolution 3236 of 1974, and the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, Palestinians who are considered Palestinian refugees have the "right of return."

Israel however is rejecting this "right of return" for Palestinians stating that this would mean an end to Israel's identity as a Jewish state. Israel denies responsibility for the displacement of Palestinians and points out that between 1948 and 1972 around 800,000 Jews were expelled or had to flee from Arab countries like Morocco, Iraq, Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen.

Though seemingly implausible, but at one point this century - in Egypt in January 2001 - Israelis and Palestinians were negotiating how to carry out UN General Assembly Resolution 194. This important resolution was passed on 11th December 1948, with 35 countries, including the US and the UK, voting for it. But today we seem to be at the farthest possible distance

from seeing justice carried out for Palestinian refugees and their descendants.

Originally, the Zionist movement was propelled by the logic of settler colonialism. Historian Patrick Wolfe has defined it as a mode of domination characterised by "a logic of elimination". Settler colonial regimes seek to smother the native people, or at least to suppress their political autonomy. The elimination of the native people is a precondition for expropriating the land and its natural resources.

Jewish-American intellectual Noam Chomsky, observed that "settler colonialism is the most extreme and sadistic form of imperialism". The hallmark of settler colonialism is ruthlessness and the disregard for law, justice and morality. And currently we are witnessing all these aspects under the Zionist Israeli regime.

The Zionist movement was nothing if not ruthless. It did not plan to cooperate with the native Arab population for the common good. On the contrary, it always planned to supplant them. The only way the Zionist project could be realised and maintained was by expelling a large number of Arabs from their homes and taking over their land.

Apparently, Israel was able to achieve this, with the help of the British politicians and in later years, with the tacit American support. If we have to resolve the Palestinian issue, then the only credible option is for the UN to influence both the UK and USA to play a constructive role not a confrontational or bipartisan approach towards resolving the issue, as per the aspirations of the Palestinian people and demands of fair and equal justice.

On the other hand, the position of Arab states on the issue was evident from the statement made by the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who stressed his country's commitment to the Palestinian statehood at the Arab League summit on Friday last, amid intensified US efforts to broker a normalisation deal between the Gulf kingdom and Israel. The comments are largely standard for leadership in Riyadh, which has long insisted publicly that it remains committed to the Palestinian cause and will only normalise ties with Israel after a two-state solution has been reached. But it also shows the lack of resolve on their part to get the Palestinian issue resolved once for all.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer
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Maintenance of Lakes for Water Crisis

Lalit Garg

DUE TO BLOCKING OF THE WAY OF RIVERS AND MOUNTAIN SPRINGS THERE, THE WATER REACHING THE LAKES HAS REDUCED CONSIDERABLY. Irrational exploitation of water of many lakes has increased. They are being used extensively for industrial units.

A recent research done on the threats hovering over the world's lakes has said that water in more than half of the world's largest lakes and reservoirs is continuously decreasing and they are on the verge of drying up. Due to this, the future water security of humans in many parts of the earth may be at risk. Climate change, increasing heat and increasing water consumption are believed to be the biggest reasons for the drying up of lakes and large reservoirs. At a time when the acute crisis of drinking water is being felt and the emphasis is being laid on the conservation of natural sources of water, it raises new revelations and concerns from this research.

A team included scientists from the US, France and Saudi Arabia to systematically study the scourge. They looked at 1,972 of Earth's largest lakes and reservoirs using satellite images from 1992 to 2020. They focused on large freshwater lakes largely because of the improved accuracy of satellites as well as their importance to humans and wildlife.

In this study, it was tried to see how and how much the amount of water in the lakes has changed in about 30 years. The results found that 53 percent of lakes and reservoirs showed a decline in water content at a rate of about 22 gigatonnes annually. In this way, it is a warning for the governments and social organizations working for water conservation. Lakes are a type of natural reservoir, whose water is used for drinking water and industries etc. Just as there has been a deep crisis of drinking water in many cities of the world due to the decreasing water level of the rivers, in the same way, if the lakes keep shrinking, then this crisis will become more serious.

Today, the whole world is standing under the shadow of a water crisis due to falling water levels in rivers and lakes.

Unplanned industrialization, increasing pollution, decreasing deserts and glaciers, declining water level of rivers, environmental destruction, exploitation of nature and insensitivity towards its misuse are leading the whole world towards a major water crisis. Packet and bottled water are becoming symbols of development today and our carelessness towards our resources is making it easier to hand over our basic needs to marketism.

Experts have identified water as one of the major resources that will be the most challenging task to manage in the future. Rivers and lakes, which have been a source of pure water for centuries, are getting polluted due to the promotion of tourism, the water harvesting system is deteriorating, and the water level is continuously decreasing. Today, it is necessary to ensure the availability of clean and safe water from the lakes in all the countries of the world, as well as focus on the importance of water conservation. You can think how much water a human being uses in his lifetime, but does he try to save so much water?

Continuous studies have been done regarding the drying up of lakes, rivers, reservoirs and other natural water sources, the reasons are also clear from their data. But the practical measures that are expected for their protection are not being implemented. The source of the lakes is usually water coming from the mountains. It is accumulated in the form of melting snow or rainwater. But due to climate change, the way the heat is increasing all over the world, in many places there is no snow on the mountains as before and there is not enough rain. Then the ratio of the water that is produced from them has deteriorated. Due to the short duration of the rainy season and less or more amount of rain, sufficient water is not stored in the lakes. Life cannot be imagined without water.

Apart from humans and animals, wa-

ter is also essential for all forms of agriculture and most industrial production processes. But about 70 percent of the earth's area is covered with water. But, potable water is only three percent, out of this only one percent of sweet water is actually used by us. In which lakes and rivers are the main water sources. But, man does not miss wasting precious water in his tourism, health, convenience, show off and luxury.

While using water, we do not think at all about saving water, as a result of which a situation of water crisis has arisen in most of the lakes and rivers. As the temperature is rising, the water problem is taking a dire shape in many parts of India. Every year this problem is increasing more than before. The main reason for this is the ever increasing tourism and industrial commercial activities on the mountains. A major disadvantage of promoting the tourism industry has also been that commercial activities have increased in the lakes, due to which garbage has accumulated in them. Due to the lack of a regular desalting system, they have become shallow.

The banks of many lakes have been shrinking. Major lakes of the country, be it Dal Lake in Kashmir or Pushkar Sarovar or Udaipur Lakes – this is not only the result of the neglect of the governments, but also shows the apathy of the social organizations. Earlier the safety of community water sources was ensured, but now that tradition has almost ended. If the health of the lakes is to be improved, then this feeling of indifference and neglect will have to be abandoned, a planned understanding and thinking will have to be developed for the water source and conservation of the lakes.

The main water source of the water of the lakes in India is the melting of the snow coming from the mountains and the water coming from the springs. The mountains of Uttarakhand here are great examples of that. But due to the

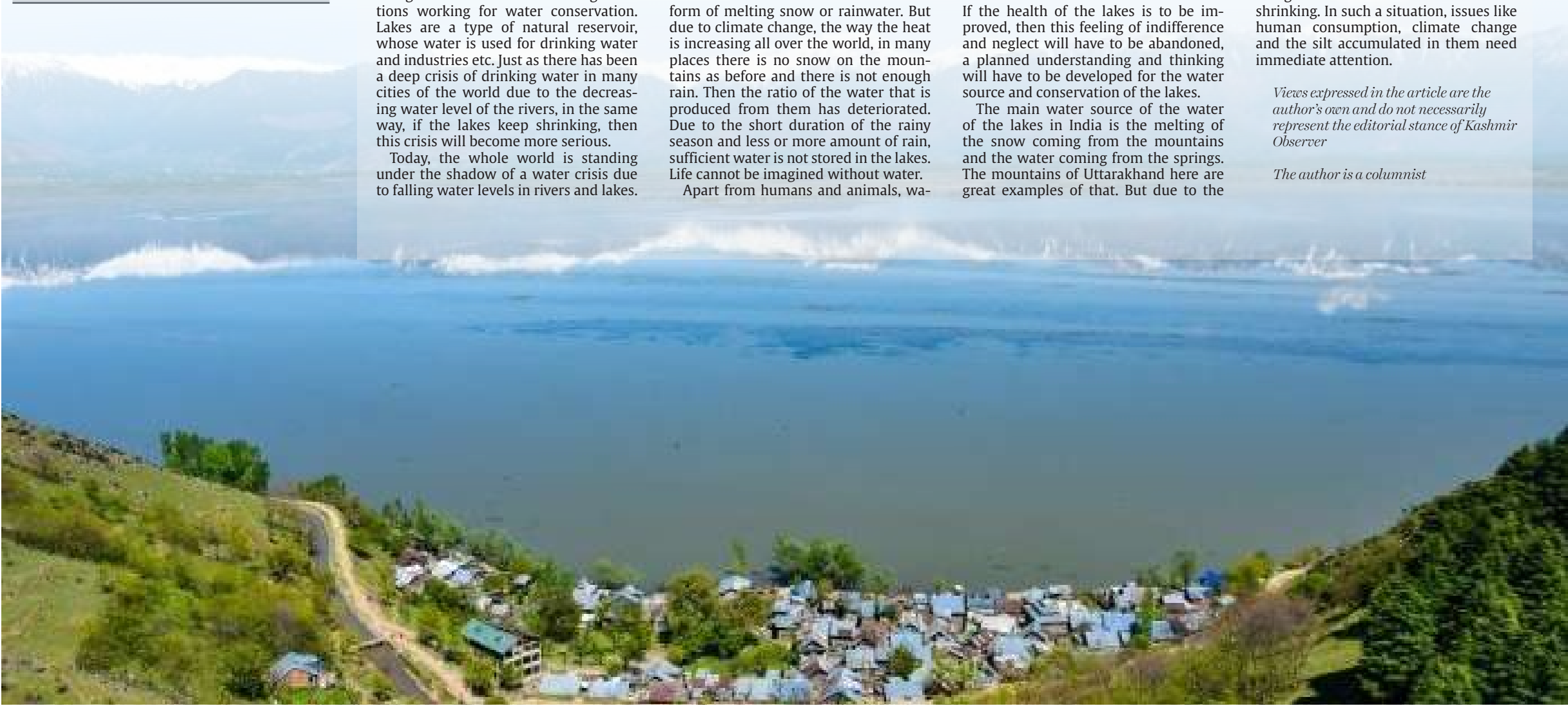
large-scale development projects started there, not only have the incidents of landslides and landslides increased, but many natural water sources are also facing danger. Due to blocking of the way of rivers and mountain springs there, the water reaching the lakes has reduced considerably. Irrational exploitation of water of many lakes has increased. They are being used extensively for industrial units.

According to a United Nations report, global water use has increased six-fold over the past 100 years, and continues to grow at a rate of about one percent per year due to increasing population, economic development, and changes in consumption patterns. Along with an erratic and uncertain supply of water, climate change has exacerbated the situation in currently water-scarce areas. In such a situation, water conservation is the only solution. Water conservation means preventing wastage of water and preventing it from getting polluted. Because if there is water then there is tomorrow. In these, it is necessary to preserve the water of the lakes and pay attention to their natural sources.

According to the research, recent drought events in different parts of the world including South India have also contributed to the declining storage of lakes and reservoirs. According to the researchers, about a quarter of the world's population i.e. 200 million people are living in such basins where the lakes are shrinking. In such a situation, issues like human consumption, climate change and the silt accumulated in them need immediate attention.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer

The author is a columnist



Acquaintances Are Good for You

Abigail Fagan

Throughout a normal week, you may chat with a delivery driver who stops at your home, strike up a conversation with the person you always see at the gym, or trade recipes with an acquaintance from the dog park.

Most people have dozens of interactions each week with others they recognize but don't know well. In some instances, you may not even know the other person's name!

For decades, researchers have investigated the impact of what sociologists call "weak ties" – acquaintances that you see regularly but aren't close with. These could be co-workers, former classmates, members of the same social group, or just simply that person you recognize from the subway most mornings. The body of evidence shows that these interactions are more important than you may think.

A recent summary of the evidence on social connections notes the importance of weak or casual contacts in promoting well-being and mental health. Evidence shows older adults with more weak ties are more likely to experience more positive emotions, less likely to become depressed, and more likely to form new close ties in the future. Another study found that weak ties may help to pre-



vent cognitive decline in older adults. A similar study of college students

found that students felt happier, less lonely, and experienced a sense of

belonging on days they interacted more frequently with weak ties.

And a more recent study conducted by researchers at Stanford, MIT, and Harvard – the largest experimental study to date on weak ties – found that weaker social connections on digital job sites have a more positive effect on advancing their careers. Researchers used LinkedIn's "People You May Know" algorithm to conduct experiments with 20 million people around the world. Their experiments found that exposure to moderately weak ties increased job mobility the most while exposure to the strongest ties increased job mobility the least.

When considering social connections in research, many factors are likely at play. For example, people with more weak ties could simply be more outgoing; research has already established that extroversion is associated with happiness.

Still, the evidence is clear: Cultivating weak ties is a surefire way to improve your mood, promote well-being, and maybe even move up the career ladder. So, the next time you head to your favorite coffee shop, strike up a conversation with the barista, or make a point to get to know the cashier at your local grocery store. The data is clear: It's good for you.

– Psychology Today

G20 Delegates

a question about whether he recommends film stars from Korea to shoot in Kashmir, Jeebok said it is not easy to bring Korean pop-stars or movie stars to India as they have their own agendas.

Heaping praises on beauty and hospitality of Kashmir, the Korean delegate said he was so excited to be in Kashmir to attend the 3rd working meeting of tourism track delegates under India's G20 presidency.

"It was so good so far, and so exciting, it was an awesome and fantastic experience, dancing here is kind of a dream come true, I had never imagined doing so. The 3rd working group meeting is being held in Srinagar, then the final stage is set in Goa and hopefully the member states will come up for a consensus. As far as the Korean delegation is concerned, we are very supportive of the G20 presidency of India for its great success," he said, adding the Shikara ride was so beautiful and a serene experience.

Aziz Kilatwala, another G20 representative from Bahrain, representing the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), said the foreign delegates have a key role to play in promoting Kashmir as top travel destinations, so that tourists from other parts of the world are tempted to visit Kashmir. Talking to the reporters on the sidelines of the 3rd G20 working group meeting at SKICC here, the Bahrain delegate said Kashmir is one of the few places on earth that gives people the feeling of being in heaven.

"I genuinely believe that I and other international delegates have a big job to do once we return. Kashmir itself has done a tremendous job of marketing in this direction. Now it's our responsibility to take an extra step and make sure that we promote Kashmir as top travel destinations of the world," he said.

The Bahraini representative responded that he arrived in Kashmir via New Delhi, when questioned whether he flew directly from Saudi Arabia. He said Kashmir has so much natural beauty and that he is happy to be here as part of the G20 delegation.

Kilatwala said there is definitely potential for aspiring filmmakers of Saudi Arabia and GCC as a whole to explore Kashmir and rest of India for locations where they get the true essence.

"I will tell people, that whosoever wants to experience true natural beauty and its most pure form, Kashmir is one of the few places on the planet where they can get that type of experience. I will tell them about the people as to how welcoming and hospitable they have been, I will surely convey," he added.

J&K Witnessing

needs good infrastructure, sound policies and effective and responsive administration. No less fundamental to me is the fact that only peace and happiness of people can bring warmth in the hospitality, we Indians eternally enjoy," he said

J&K, he said, stands today among the developed regions of India on some measurable milestones, and that his administration is committed for people's prosperity both economically and socially.

"Prime Minister Modi has completely eliminated injustice, exploitation and discrimination which several sections of society faced for seven long decades owing to circumstances that evolved mostly because of orchestration from abroad. We are ensuring social equality and equal economic opportunity to all citizens, which is also enabling them to contribute to the nation building," Sinha said

Throwing light on the transformation of J&K, the LG said that the grass root democracy has been strengthened; new industries are coming up, rapid agricultural growth is making our villages prosperous, new institutions have been opened up in higher education, youths are being trained for Industry 4.0 technologies, infrastructure development is progressing rapidly and our emphasis on technology is transforming Jammu Kashmir into a digital society.

Expressing his gratitude to PM Modi, Sinha said that in the past 4 years, the ranking of J&K on the various parameters of sustainable development goals have gone up due to the visionary leadership of PM.

"The world can see that the entire society, especially the young generation is scripting a bright future for themselves and the nation. The speed and scale of rapid development in Jammu Kashmir are awe-inspiring. Our speed to execute infrastructure projects has gone up almost 10 times," he said.

Acknowledging the impact of Covid on tourism and the world, the LG said, the pandemic made the world realize the hard way the virtues of traveler's well-being and also the values of a shared vision One earth, One family and One future.

"The paradigm shift towards sustainable living, inclusive and sustainable development is also an opportunity to provide new impetus to sustainable tourism. I am truly delighted that under India's G20 Presidency, the G20 Tourism Working Group is focusing on five inter-connected priority areas. Green tourism, digitalization, skills, tourism MSMEs and destination management will provide a roadmap for tourism as a tool for achieving sustainable development goals," Sinha said.

He noted that J&K is already working on a few of the priority areas identified by the G20 Tourism Working Group like Green Tourism, Skills, Tourism MSMEs and Digitalization.

He emphasised that in the post-pandemic era five key building blocks will promote environmental awareness, protect the ecology and improve the economy and livelihoods of communities and inclusive growth of stakeholders.

Underlining that the G20 TWG meeting is taking place in the land of majestic peaks, crystal-clear lakes and serene green landscape, the LG said that J&K is more than a tourism destination.

"It is poetry. It's a land of realisation. It is an energy field vibrating with the ageless Indian cultural values. Under the guidance of Prime Minister Modi, we have ensured that the transition in the tourism sector in the backdrop of a pandemic focuses on the needs of travelers, interests of industry stakeholders, creates employment opportunities and promote environmental awareness," he said.

The LG also referred to the record number of 18 million tourists visiting the Union Territory.

"Last year, the tourism sector made a 7% contribution to Jammu Kashmir GDP. We have identified 300 new destinations to promote green tourism, small & medium enterprises, youth and women entrepreneurs and involve local communities to support sustainable tourism," Sinha said.

"Tourism sector in Jammu Kashmir has been accorded the status of Industry and all fiscal incentives as per our Industrial Policy and I can tell you, we are receiving massive investment proposals from the industries in hospitality sector," he added.

The LG further said that after a long pause of almost 4-decades, J&K administration has revived the relationship with Bollywood and launched a film policy in 2021 to attract more investment into the

film sector.

He said that over 300 movies were filmed in the region last year and such enthusiasm is bringing about a qualitative change in the lives of people.

"Our aim is to make the countryside and popular destinations more sustainable and preserve the beauty of fascinating heritage sites. I am confident, under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Jammu Kashmir will soon find its place in the top 50 destinations in the world and it will be on the travel bucket list of global travelers," he added.

During the inaugural session Union Tourism Minister, G. Kishan Reddy; Union MoS Dr. Jitendra Singh; Union MoS Ajay Bhatt; G20 Sherpa, Amitabh Kant; G20 Chief Coordinator, Harsh Vardhan Shringla; delegates of G20 nations, invitees from observer countries and representatives from various multilateral organisations were present.

'Today's J&K Not

Gujarat, and except China, all G20 nations delegates, representatives and other stakeholders of the tourism industry of the respective countries are participating in the event," the LG said.

He said that he has also been informed that 57 delegates from 27 countries were participating in the G20 meeting at Srinagar which reflects India's strength of ancient values of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

Expressing gratitude to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for providing a historic opportunity to J&K to host the 3rd TWG meeting, the LG said that today's inaugural session was very exciting and productive.

"The significant deliberation, exchange of views and perspectives will help in building a framework based on five priority areas for sustainable tourism as we advance towards post Covid pandemic era," he said

J&K, Sinha said, is governed by the Constitution of India, which has established rule of law and supremacy of the people.

"It's a land of peace and prosperity that responsible and responsive administration is trying too hard to bring in the lives of the people. Grass-root democracy has been growing from strength to strength. The three-tier PRI system has ensured stability and consistency in development and participation of people in policy making," he said.

He said that the digital revolution has unleashed socio-cultural transformation, which has empowered every section of the society, especially the young generation.

"We have an open and vibrant press and more than 400 newspapers are published every day," he added.

Asserting that Jammu Kashmir is fully committed to the effort to build on shared aspirations for sustainable tourism, the LG said that PM Modi has accorded highest priority to sustainable social & economic development of the Union Territory.

"In the last 4 years, policies and programmes have been reshaped so that the benefits of growth percolate to the masses and nurture the nature. In the tourism sector, there has been unprecedented increase in the tourist footfall after the second wave of covid pandemic and we were happy to host over 18 million tourists last year, which, I would say, was unparalleled since Independence," Sinha said.

He said his government's focus on green tourism, offbeat destinations, involvement of local communities, and according industry status to the tourism sector has turned this sector into one of the most flourishing industries in Jammu Kashmir.

"Our sustained reforms", including a new film policy, modern infrastructure and ease of doing business has transformed Jammu Kashmir into a preferred destination for shooting of films, which is also strengthening the economy and providing employment opportunities to the people. Overall tourism offered a large number of employment and contributed around 7% to its GDP in the last fiscal year," he said.

"With more than 65% of the population below 35 years of age, we are witnessing the emergence of a powerful force of youth that is contributing to invention, innovation and research," he added.

Speaking on the sports activities, the LG said that 6 million youth participated in various sporting events across Jammu Kashmir while every district has a multi-purpose indoor sports hall. Gulmarg, he said, is being transformed into a world-class winter sports destination.

"We wanted to take our G20 delegates to Gulmarg and show them its scenic beauty but due to time constraints it may not happen this time," he added.

Talking about grass-root level empowerment, the LG said that all 4292 Panchayats in J&K have a Youth Club to seize the opportunity globalization has to offer.

Besides, he said, the admin has also set up a dedicated department, Mission Youth, to help young men and women to achieve their dreams and build a vibrant society free from fear, discrimination and exploitation.

Lauding the guidance of the PM, the LG said that his administration has taken a very wide range of decisions to accelerate the implementation of mega infrastructure projects, modernization of health, agriculture, energy sector, and brought transparency and accountability in the governance system to script a new chapter of growth in Jammu Kashmir.

"Jammu Kashmir is future ready. And, Jammu Kashmir is ambitious. Our multi-sectoral achievements reflect that. We are registering a new start-up every other day. In the last four years, we have registered 7.7 lakh new entrepreneurs, which roughly means that per day 527 youth started their entrepreneurial journey to contribute to their individual and Jammu Kashmir's growth," Sinha said.

"And, this is not all. We are ensuring fast industrial development to bring rapid social transformation. On an average, we are receiving 7 to 8 applications every day from different industrial houses from India and abroad, who are willing to set up their facilities here. In 2022, on an average one industry became operational per day," he added

In a very short span of time, the LG said J&K was advancing towards building a digital society. He said his government was offering over 450 public services in online mode. Our entire administration is paperless.

Giving further details, the LG said that in 2022, J&K recorded 1.2 million e-transactions per day while in the first 4 month of 2023, 2.3 million e-transactions have been recorded, which is higher than many other states.

"With more than 150 higher education institutions, two central universities, seven state universities and by establishing all premier educational institutions, Jammu Kashmir is ready to contribute to India's knowledge economy," he said.

He also referred to the acceleration of projects post 2019, saying it has gone up by times.

In 2018, the LG said, 9229 projects were completed whereas in the last financial year, 92,560 projects were finished. He said that his government is building an effective and efficient rural infrastructure and the number and fast-paced developments show UT admin's resolve to build Aatm-Nirbhar Jammu Kashmir.

"We are working with innovative approaches to exploit our strength and empower our farmers. With sustained efforts in the last 2-3 years while managing pandemic, Jammu Kashmir figures in the top five states of the country in terms of monthly farm income," the LG said.

"We are implementing 29 projects worth Rs.5013 crore, to increase farmer's income by 4 times in the next five years. We are number one in terms of production of saffron, apple, walnut and almond in India, and industries in processing and value additions will provide new height to Jammu Kashmir," he added.

Listing the empowerment of women as one of the achievements of his administration, the LG said that over 6 lakh women entrepreneurs through self-help groups are reaching global scales in terms of quality and output.

"Jammu Kashmir is becoming a centre and export hub for diverse goods, from agricultural products to handicrafts to horticulture produce. All these strengths have resulted in a greater integration with the global market, which has helped us to lay foundation for even better prospects ahead," he said.

He further said that he would have outlined socio-economic achievements of Jammu Kashmir in some detail with a wish that it captures news mind and space tomorrow.

"These achievements also show that we are firmly resolved to continue with the reform process and accelerated development in every sector. Friends, this is just the beginning of the turnaround of Jammu Kashmir, the crown of incredible India," Sinha said.

He also recalled a quote by Sri Aurobindo to conclude the presser.

Pak Has No

investments in popular tourist states like Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

"We have to project India as the number-one destination globally. Private investment is necessary and without it, a huge country like India with such a huge population and lakhs of destinations cannot increase tourism," he said.

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government wants people from across the world to come and invest in tourist destinations to make them world-class, the minister said.

Referring to the ongoing G20 meeting here, Reddy said such meetings would take place in the capitals of all states. He said 250 meetings will take place in 56 cities under the presidentship of India.

"It was decided to organise this meeting in Srinagar, which is a historic city. However, some precautions had to be taken because it is after so many years that such an event is taking place here, J-K has seen many incidents, there were different problems in J-K, but now, the atmosphere is great here.

"People want development in J-K, they want infrastructure, employment generation at par with the rest of India. That is what the common people of J-K hope and expect. That is why we are taking J-K on the path of progress under the vision of PM Modi," Reddy said.

He said the meeting will deliberate on the steps to be taken in order to double tourism's contribution to Jammu and Kashmir's GDP.

"Last year, tourism contributed seven per cent of J-K's GDP. How to take it to 15 per cent this year and how to increase employment avenues, this meeting will discuss that. The G20 meeting will not only benefit J-K, but the whole country," the minister said.

He also expressed gratitude to the people and the government of Jammu and Kashmir for supporting the meeting. "In the times to come, Srinagar will become the number-one destination for tourists not only from India but from across the world and we will work towards that along with the people of J-K," he added.

On PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's remarks that the BJP has hijacked the G20 meeting, Reddy said some opposition parties did not want peace in the Union territory.

"Today, developmental works are happening at a faster pace for the first time since Independence. So, I appeal to opposition parties for support, and if you cannot support, then sit silently at home and do not become a hurdle," he added.

The Union minister further said no one can separate Jammu and Kashmir from the rest of India, and accused the opposition parties of insulting the people of the UT. "We will together take J-K on the path of development. You should not insult J-K or its people. They (opposition parties) want law-and-order problems here, terror problems, hartals, people involved in AK47 and RDX. They do not want peace," he claimed.

The government's priority is peace and it will work with zero-tolerance on the issue of militancy, Reddy added.

Singh Calls

a last impact on travel destinations as the cinematic exposure to a destination transforms the place into a tourist destination," he said.

Reddy impressed upon the states and UTs to have formal polices for the promotion of film tourism. Wherever there is an existing policy, the same may be strengthened to pave way for film production," Reddy added.

Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Apurva Chandra in his detailed session on 'Facilitating Film Tourism in India through Film Facilitation' said India's film sector has very much to offer to the world having skilled manpower, visualisation and sound effects.

"The culture and heritage of India provides an enabling environment to the world to shot the best films here," Chandra added.

To provide an enabling environment to the film industry, Film Facilitation Office at NFDC with proactive nodal officers has been set up as a single window mechanism to enable and expedite the issuance of film visas to international cast and crew.

Chandra also highlighted India as a hub of animation, visual effects and gaming. A number of noted master pieces, the big budget films have been produced in India with lesser production costs which is a magnet of attraction to the film makers, he added.

Various important sessions of the side event on Tourism deliberated upon how to leverage the power of Film Tourism to promote destinations. The sessions provided an opportunity to the States/ UTs to share their policies and best practices which helped them develop film tourism. The event also provided opportunity to the Industry Stakeholders to give their suggestions and feedback on the factors that will encourage filmmakers to shoot in various locations in the country.

Srinagar Blend

a part of the global world, and India, under the prime ministership of Narendra Modi, is very cautious of that," the MoS said.

Singh said India's challenges, concerns, and benchmarks were global, and its growth also has to be global.

"That is why Modi is concerned about climate challenges. We have also committed to achieving a net zero target by 2070," he added.

The minister said the significance of holding the G20 event in Srinagar is that it's a strange blend of our traditional heritage and the most modern infrastructure with cutting-edge technology.

"Srinagar, Kashmir, has been one of the earliest seats of learning both in Persian as well as in Sanskrit. It has a wide range of artisanship, and craftsmanship, ranging from carpets, embroidery, and shawls.

"On the other hand, we have the most advanced infrastructural upgraded projects. We have the highest railway bridge in the world which is 35 metres higher than the Eiffel Tower. It is located over river Chenab which is one of largest rivers in India," he said.

Singh said Jammu and Kashmir also has Asia's longest bi-directional road tunnel which is known as Shyama Prasad Mukherjee tunnel - on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway.

Referring to India's presidency of the G20, the Union minister said India is ready to share the global responsibility as far as our obligation towards the economy, environment, and society is concerned.

Speaking at the event, Union Tourism Minister G K Reddy said he was happy to see that tourism working groups were progressing in the right direction.

"I am sure that the joint efforts of all the G20 members, invited countries, and international organisations will result in the achievement of the inclusive, action-oriented and decisive guidelines for the tourism industry," he said.

The Union tourism minister said he was confident that across the country, wherever the delegates would go, Indians will treat them like family. I wish you to enjoy your stay and return to India over and over again with your families, friends and citizens of your countries, he added.

India's G20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant while addressing the inaugural session, said whatever recommendations the meeting would give, they would find a very major place in the final leaders' communique which will be issued after the meeting of the leaders on September 9-10.

"It is important because tourism is a very major driver of growth, and job creation," he said.

Kant said five priority areas have been identified -- green tourism, digitalisation, skill development, tourism MSMEs and destination management -- and commendable progress has been made on these in the previous meetings.

The G20 tourism track is also working to further the achievement of green inclusive and resilient tourism development. As the voice of the global south, and an emerging economy, India's presidency focussed on tourism has been guided by the efforts to build back the tourism sector better following the Covid pandemic globally, Kant said.

The tourism sector has a very critical role to play in skilling, reskilling and upskilling the tourism sector, the G20 Sherpa said.

He said over the next two days, the delegates will truly experience why Kashmir is known as the heaven on earth.

As the prime minister emphasises, tourism is the jewel in India's crown, tourism is a natural magnet. The people of Jammu and Kashmir have always complimented the natural beauty and bounty of this place with their rich tradition of warmth and hospitality. This is the bedrock for creating a successful tourism experience, Kant added.

He said last year, a record number of tourists -- highest in 75 years of India's Independence - visited Jammu and Kashmir.

Kant also said that the number of delegates present at the working group meeting in Srinagar was the highest amongst all the working group meetings.

"We are very grateful to all of you for joining us in this beautiful city of Kashmir in Srinagar. This is a record number of delegates that we have received amongst all the working groups, and we are very thankful to all of you," he added.

Chief Coordinator for India's G20 presidency Harsh Vardhan Shringla said the country has so far hosted 118 meetings under its presidency.

"Srinagar is one of the most iconic tourist locations, we are really privileged to be here. Last year, J&K received a record number of tourists. We expect the figures to be higher this year," he said.

He expressed hope that the meeting would spur a greater number of tourists to visit this important location.

"It will bring much-needed cheer to local traders, craftsmen who depend on tourism," he added.

Meanwhile, the Boulevard and Gupkar roads leading to the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) on the shores of the famous Dal Lake here remained off limits for people for the second consecutive day on Tuesday.

Security personnel have sealed both roads - which approach the meeting venue - as a security measure to ensure the event concludes incident-free, officials said.

The movement of people and transport was not allowed and the traffic was diverted through other routes, they said.

The officials said security forces have been deployed in strength around the meeting venue as well as elsewhere to keep a close vigil.

Checkpoints have been erected at many places in the city here and security forces personnel were undertaking random checking and frisking of the vehicles to ensure that no subversive elements manage to enter the city.

China's Loss

said the Ministry of External Affairs will take a call on that.

On holding the G20 event in Kashmir, Singh said different venues will give an idea to the delegates about the places they visit.

"We are not a small, homogeneous nation like some countries in Europe. We are a diverse country," the Union Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office added.

Asked about Pakistani propaganda on Kashmir, the minister said the common people have moved on.

"What is most important is that the common man has moved on. If you talk to a man on streets in Srinagar, he may not talk freely. But with decisive action against terror, the veil of fear is being lifted," he added. A day earlier, Singh said Kashmir has undergone a change and "common people on the streets of Srinagar want to move on. They have lost two generations (due to militancy)."

53 Foreign Delegates

Union and other multilateral organisations like World Trade Organisation (WTO) International Labour Organisation (ILO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). KNO

16 Candidates from

Governor Manoj Sinha has congratulated Waseem Ahmad Bhat, Parsanjeet Kour and others for the feat.

"Congratulations Waseem Ahmad Bhat and Parsanjeet Kour. With 7th and 11th rank respectively in UPSC Civil Services examination, you have done us really proud. Your achievements will inspire all the youth of J&K. Best Wishes to all those who successfully cleared the exam," LG Tweeted.

Political parties too congratulated candidates on their success.

"We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Waseem Ahmad Bhat from Anantnag district for securing the 7th rank, and to Prasanjeet Kour from Poonch district for securing the 11th rank in the UPSC CSE 2022 Final Result," the party said on Twitter.

It also wished luck to those who could not make it to the final list.

"To those who were unable to achieve their desired outcome, we wish them the best of luck in their future endeavours and trust that they will find success in whatever path life unfolds before them," the NC said.

Apni Party president Altaf Bukhari said it was a proud moment for Jammu and Kashmir.

"I extend my heartiest greetings to the UPSC aspirants from J&K for qualifying for the exam with flying colours. Many Many Congratulations to Prasanjeet Kour from Poonch and Waseem Ahmad Bhat from Anantnag for qualifying UPSC exam as it is a proud moment for us," he said.

Hard Work & Family

Institute of Technology, Srinagar. In 2019, Bhat graduated from NIT as a civil engineer while in 2021, Bhat secured 225 overall rank in the UPSC Civil Services exam.

Parshanjeet Kour from Poonch said that she relied on self-studies with no coaching at all.

"Hard work, dedication and motivational support by the family are my success catalysts," the 23-year-old UPSC qualifier said.

"I had high hopes of qualifying for this prestigious exam but was not sure about such a good rank," she said. Parshanjeet also qualified for Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Services this year at the 11th mark. She had her basic schooling from Poonch and completed her graduation from Poonch Degree College; then pursued Masters from the University of Jammu.

Similarly, Dr Iram, a student of medical studies and a pass-out of MBBS in 2000, left her medical profession to become a civil servant. She originally hails from the remote Leeran village of Darhal tehsil in the Rajouri district but the family presently lives in Jammu.

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) held the main examination for the Civil Services in September 2022 and Personal Interviews between January and May 2023. A total of 933 candidates have been recommended for IAS, IPS, IFS, IRS, and other civil services posts.

The UPSC preliminary exam was held on June 5, 2022 and the results were released in June 2022. The main examination was conducted from September 16 to 25 and the results declared on December 6 followed by viva-voce on May 18, 2023. --With Inputs from KNO

Ladakh Parties

implemented. We have said it before and repeated it now, that we aren't against the dialogue process but we want to make it clear that we are ready to sacrifice anything to press our demands," he added.

LAB member, Cherring Dorjay Lakruk told Kashmir Observer that since there was no response from the centre, it was decided to hold a fresh meeting with the government of India.

The two groups were formed in the twin districts following the region's resentment against the central government for failing to provide constitutional, job, and land safeguard to the region after the creation of a separate Union Territory in August 2019.

It may be noted that on January 3, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) constituted a high-powered committee headed by Minister of State Nityanand Rai to "ensure protection of land and employment" for the people of Ladakh. But the Apex Bodies decided to stay away from the Centre's High Powered Committee (HPC).

However, after six months, both the groups decided to soften their stand and announced "unconditional talks".

Earlier, the representatives were demanding to change the agenda for the dialogue and trim down the members of the High Powered Committee (HPC).

The four point agenda includes full-fledged statehood for Ladakh; constitutional safeguards under the 6th schedule of the Indian Constitution, early recruitment process & PSC for Ladakh and separate Lok Sabha seats for Leh and Kargil districts.

KDA leader Sajjad Kargili told Kashmir Observer that there was communication from the government of India to hold the dialogue without any agenda and today it was decided in the meeting to resume talks without any conditions.

Notably, the Leh region witnessed massive protest in January this year after top environmentalist Sonam Wangchuk had announced a five-day long climate fast at 18,380 feet high Khardung La pass to invite attention of the BJP-led Centre to address the demands of Ladakhis.

Both the leaders from the Buddhist majority-Leh and Muslim majority Kargil are on the same page and have organised a number of protests to press their demands. The leaders have been demanding Constitutional safeguards on the lines of 6th schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Rains In Plains,

above normal for the summer capital. Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 10.8°C against 9.0°C on the previous night while the tourist resort of Pahalgam in South Kashmir recorded a low of 10.2°C against 6.2°C on the previous night.

In Kupwara town, he said, the mercury settled at 12.6°C against 9.4°C on the previous night and it was 2.2°C above normal for the north Kashmir area.

Kokernag recorded a low of 11.6°C against 11.8°C on the previous night and it was 1.5°C above normal for the place, the officials said.

Gulmarg recorded a low of 9.0°C against 9.5°C on previous night and it was above normal by 2.2°C for the world famous skiing resort in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, he said.

Jammu recorded a low of 26.4°C against 25.1°C on the previous night and it was 2.0°C above normal for J&K's winter capital, he said.

Banihal recorded a low of 14.7°C (above normal by 2.7°C), Batote 17.3°C (2.8°C above normal), Katra 24.4°C (3.4°C above normal) and Bhaderwah 12.7°C (above normal by 2.1°C). Ladakh's Leh and Kargil recorded a low of 5.0°C and 9.9°C respectively, he said. (GNS)

Court Refuses To Release Passport Of Para's Brother-In-Law

M Ahmad

SRINAGAR: Special Judge Designated Under NIA Act Srinagar has rejected an application seeking release of various articles seized from brother-in-law of Waheed-Ur-Rehman Para, a PDP leader, in connection with a case registered against later.

CIK had on December 30, 2020 seized Mobile Phone—Redmi Note 8 and Passport of Para's brother-in-law, Abdal Ahmad Bhat of Murran Pulwama in connection with case (FIR NO. 31/2020).

"The bare perusal of the police report and case file transpires that the articles in question have been seized by the police in the above said FIR and the investigation of the case as per the police report has partially been completed and the seized property is further required for the purpose of investigation by the Investigating Agency," Sandeep Gandotra, the presiding officer of the court, said. "Since the formal request through MLAT (Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties) has already been initiated with the foreign country (USA) through the Ministry of Home Affairs Govt. of India with the respect to the extraction of evidence from the seized articles in the above titled case and it is further required by the Investigating as such, this court cannot release the article(s)/document(s) in question at this stage, even temporarily on the Supernama of



the petitioners," the court said and rejected Bhat's application.

In its report, police stated that "some political functionaries misused their membership, position and affiliation with the political parties and have as a part of criminal conspiracy, established clandestine connection and relations with different Pakistani supported (militant) and secessionist organizations operating in J&K for a populace, countering the influence of rival political parties and their members, protecting their own financial and business interests and with medium term motives of winning the trust of the Pakistani establishment, dealing with subversion in Kashmir including those in the United Jihad Council."

Police further said that during the course of investigation search of the houses of suspects including one Mst. Sooji Jan Wife of Abdaal Ahmad and the articles and documents were seized from her house and not Bhat's residence.

Earlier Bhat had contended that he has neither arrayed as accused nor arrested in the FIR and that he is not involved in any of the offences in the case. He said the charge sheet of the case has already been produced before the court and that he has also not been arrayed as witness in the case. The mobile and documents seized by the police are not directly or indirectly connected with the facts and evidence of the case, he had said.

DPAP Wants To Build J&K As Welfare State: Azad

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Democratic Progressive Azad Party chief Ghulam Nabi Azad on Tuesday said his party wants to build Jammu and Kashmir as a welfare state where people themselves are willing to pay the taxes and sought their whole-hearted support.

Azad also came down heavily on the government for its eviction drive to retrieve state and 'Roshni' land and said he will bring back the "Roshni scheme" if his party forms the government.

The Jammu and Kashmir State Lands (Vesting of Ownership to the Occupants) Act -- popularly called the "Roshni scheme" -- was enacted in 2001 with the twin objectives of generating resources to finance power projects and conferring proprietary rights to occupants of state lands. The act initially envisaged conferring proprietary rights for around 1,02,750 hectares to the occupants of which only 15.85 per cent land was approved for vesting of ownership rights.

The scheme was repealed by Satya Pal Malik, the then-governor of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, in November 2018. The Jammu and Kashmir High Court in October 2020 declared the act "illegal, unconstitutional and unsustainable" and ordered a CBI probe into the allotment of land under the law.

"It was the Democratic Pro-



gressive Azad Party that fought a regressive anti-people move of land eviction by the government in the winters (earlier this year) and forced (the administration) to withdraw the order. Such peace-

ful protests and political battles will be common to the Democratic Progressive Azad Party when it comes to the interests of the poor and the needy people," Azad said while addressing a workers' convention in Udhampur.

Azad added his party is ready to face the consequences for its pro-people policies.

"We can even face lathis on the roads if needed to protect the interests of the people," he said.

Terming the retrieval of 'Roshni' land from people as a "disaster", the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said he will bring back the act if his party comes to power.

The Democratic Progressive Azad Party stands firm in its commitment to justice and inclusiveness, embracing individuals regardless of religion, region or caste, Azad said.

"We will continue to fight for the rights of the people, irrespective of caste, religion, and (we) will have no space for those who resort to discrimination among people. The Democratic Progressive Azad Party is a hope in these trying times that only believes in healthy politics unlike parties that have no agenda other than to divide people along religious lines," he said.

Efforts Intensified To Make Public Places Smoking-Free In Kargil

Press Trust Of India

KARGIL: Authorities in Kargil district of Ladakh have directed for strict enforcement of Cigarette and Other Tobacco Product Act (COPTA) to make public places smoking-free, an official said on Tuesday.

Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, Santosh Sukhadeve expressed concern over the involvement of minors and school-going children in tobacco use and directed the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Kargil and principles of various schools to hold awareness programmes in schools to aware children about the ill effects of tobacco.

Sukhadeve was speaking at a meeting to chalk out a plan to ensure visible impact of implementation of COPTA on the ground through effective surveillance and feedback mechanism as well as taking timely measures to curb

the menace of tobacco products, the official said.

The deputy commissioner directed the officers concerned of police, health and education departments to come out with a collective and effective plan for the implementation of COPTA and against the tobacco menace in the district.

Sukhadeve also directed for special programmes at various workplaces where migrant labourers are working in large numbers to make them aware about the ill-effects of the consumption of tobacco products, the official said.

He directed police to strictly monitor the shopkeepers that sell tobacco products within the 100-metre vicinity of the school area. He directed for mobilisation of police personnel and regular vigilance in the market areas and to make public places smoking-free.

G-20 Delegates Moved By Breathtaking Artwork Of Kashmiri Artisans

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Department of Handicraft organized a spectacular exhibition at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC) Srinagar to coincide with the highly anticipated G-20 summit being hosted in the Valley for the first time.

An official said that the initiative aims to provide local artisans and craftsmen with a unique opportunity to display their exceptional talent on the international stage. "Dozens of stalls have been meticulously set up on the lush lawns of SKICC, each offering a mesmerizing glimpse into the world of Kashmiri crafts," he said.

"Visitors to the exhibition were captivated by a diverse range of exquisite creations, including the renowned Pashmina shawls, intricate silk carpets, masterful wood carvings, delicate paper mache artwork, ornate copper utensils, and tantalizing organic foods," the official said, adding that the vibrant hues of the Pashmina shawls, hand-woven with utmost precision, transported visitors to a world of elegance and luxury.

He further said that the paper mache artwork, with its delicate layers and vibrant colors, narrated stories of artistic heritage and creativity. "As visitors admired the shimmering copper utensils, they marveled at the skillful techniques employed by artisans, passed down through generations," he added.

"Each creation, carefully



crafted by skilled artisans, told a unique story of tradition, passion, and cultural richness, leaving a lasting impression on all who witnessed their splendor," he said.

Adding an immersive experience to the exhibition, accomplished artisans have been invited to showcase the intricate process of crafting these cherished products to the esteemed delegates attending the G20 summit. Their skilled hands and artistic flair will unveil the hidden secrets behind the creation of each masterpiece, leaving spectators in awe.

The artisans, brimming with pride and gratitude, recognize the immense value of participating in the G20 summit. Termed the occasion as a pivotal gateway to the international market, they said it is offering their craftsmanship for the global recognition it truly deserves.

They further expressed that during the showcase session of their products, several foreign guests displayed a keen interest and even purchased some

items. In addition to their purchases, they also placed orders for various other products, demonstrating their enthusiasm for the exquisite craftsmanship of Kashmiri artisans.

Shahnawaz Ahmad, a Silk Carpet Expert, speaks on behalf of his fellow artisans, expressing hope that the government will continue organizing similar other events in the Valley. He believes that such platforms are invaluable for showcasing and promoting Kashmiri crafts worldwide, ultimately reaching customers in every corner of the globe.

Another talented artisan, Maqbool Jan, a papier mache artist, radiates optimism as he envisions the exposure gained from the G20 summit propelling their products to new global heights. With aspirations to create more opportunities for the local artisan community, Jan said that these events not only present a chance to sell their crafts but also introduce them to e-commerce platforms, expanding their reach even further. --(KNO)

'Poonch Is Very Happy'

A Town Celebrates As Its Daughter Secures 11th Rank In IAS Exam

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: The border town of Poonch is often in the news for wrong reasons -- it cops terror attacks, witnesses intense security operations against militants and is no stranger to sounds of gunshots and bullets.

But Poonch is very happy today. One of its residents, Parsanjeet Kour, has secured the 11th rank in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). As the news of her success spread, the town burst into jubilation.

"We knew she would qualify, but to score such a good rank is amazing," her uncle Uncle Prathipal Singh said. "Poonch is very happy."

Kour, a daughter of pharmacist Nirmal Singh and Darshan Kour, expressed her desire to serve the people of Jammu and Kashmir with a particular focus on the healthcare and education sectors.

"I will choose to become an IAS officer and work for the betterment of the people in Jammu and Kashmir. There are numerous challenges in the healthcare and education sectors in Poonch, and I am determined to address them," she said. She expressed immense happiness about her success. "We are all overjoyed. There are no bounds to our happiness. My family is extremely proud as well."

Kour completed her education up to graduation in Poonch and obtained her Masters from Jammu University. She attributed her success to self-study. "I relied on self-study and joined a test series. Hard work, consistency, and patience were crucial factors in my journey," she added.

Acknowledging the support of her family throughout her preparation, Kour said, "I had hoped to clear the examination, but I didn't expect to secure such a high rank. Examinations are unpredictable."

Previously, Kour cracked the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service (JKAS) examination in 2021 and is currently undergoing training in the summer capital, Srinagar.

Kour emphasised the importance of dedicating 7 to 8 hours per day for studying. "My teachers are pleased with my dedication," she shared.

Kour cleared the Jammu and Kashmir Administrative

Unique Coaching For NEET Aspirants In Kishtwar

JAMMU: To facilitate students who face financial constraints in accessing coaching outside the district, authorities in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar have come out with a unique offline-cum-online coaching programme for NEET aspirants, an official said on Tuesday.

Scheduled to commence on Thursday, the 10-month-long course will include interactive and doubt-clearance sessions facilitated by experienced faculty members from Akash and BYJU'S, two renowned private players in the education sector, the official said.

The coaching programme was e-inaugurated by Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Ramesh Kumar on Monday at the newly constructed auditorium of Government Degree College (GDC) Kishtwar and attended by around 200 enrolled NEET aspirants and guests, he said.

"This ground-breaking initiative sets a precedent for future educational programmes, fostering

a prosperous career path for the deserving students of Kishtwar," Deputy Commissioner Devansh Yadav.

He said the programme offers both online and offline classes, utilising the state-of-the-art auditorium with its recently installed projector facility at GDC Kishtwar.

The coaching programme aims at ensuring an efficient learning experience, supported by logistic arrangements, advanced audiovisual aids, comfortable seating arrangements.

Besides other incentives for NEET aspirants will be provided including all-India test services, premium content e-subscription and live doubt-solving sessions, Yadav said.

He said the initiative was taken by the district administration to provide coaching to the students, particularly girls, who face financial constraints in accessing coaching outside the district.

service (JKAS) examination in 2021 and is undergoing training in Srinagar.

As the UPSC declared the results this afternoon, hundreds of people including her neighbours and kin thronged to her house in the radio station area to greet the family.

Her father still can't believe what her daughter has achieved. "We never expected her to score the 11th rank in the civil examination, although we were confident she would crack this examination. I can't say how happy we all are," he told reporters here. "We are all proud of her."

He said she was always dedicated to her studies and cracked the examination without any coaching.

Uncle Prathipal Singh said Kour used to dedicate most of her time to studies. "Our daughter is very simple. Her aim to achieve something big in life has been fulfilled today. She cracked KAS and IAS without any coaching."

He said she completed her M.Sc this year. "She got 32 rank in KAS but was unhappy and appeared in the examination again. Result of which is still awaited," he said.

She had told the family that

she did well in the UPSC examination as well. "We knew that she would qualify. But to score such a good rank is amazing," the uncle said.

Political parties, including the National Conference (NC) and Apni Party, too congratulated her.

"We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Waseem Ahmad Bhat from Anantnag district for securing the 7th rank, and to Prasanjeet Kour from Poonch district for securing the 11th rank in the UPSC CSE 2022 Final Result," the party said on Twitter.

It also wished luck to those who could not make it to the final list.

"To those who were unable to achieve their desired outcome, we wish them the best of luck in their future endeavour's and trust that they will find success in whatever path life unfolds before them," the NC said.

Poonch and its neighbouring Rajouri district have witnessed an increasing number of terror attacks orchestrated from across the border, with officials saying 26 Army personnel, including three officers and five paratroopers, and seven civilians have been killed in eight terror attacks since October 11, 2021 in the twin districts.

J&K Bank Wins Laurels By Earning Highest-Ever Net Profit

The Bank Seems Well Placed To Register A Very Positive Growth In The Coming Financial Year: Expert

Auqib Javeed

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Bank has achieved a historic milestone in its remarkable journey of public service by earning highest-ever net annual profit of nearly Rs 1200 crore in the last financial year, earning laurels within the Union Territory and outside

With a decade-high capital adequacy ratio of 15.39 per cent and NPAs at an eight-year low of 6.04 per cent, the bank also recorded its highest-ever quarterly profit of Rs 476 crore in the last quarter.

"Jammu and Kashmir Bank has recorded Rs 1,197 crore as net profit for FY 2022-23 which is the highest ever annual profit," a bank official told Kashmir Observer.

Terming the revenue figures "unprecedented", the official said that the bank has consistently worked on its expenditures and rationalized it.

"One of the expenses would be audit expenses wherein the bank would spend a whopping Rs 22 crore annually—that too was rationalized and brought down to Rs 15 crore only," he said.

Ejaz Ayoub, an economic researcher, told Kashmir Observer that the bank has been doing quite well in terms of cleaning its balance sheet from the last 6-8 quarters.

Ayoub said that bank's growth in advances has been pretty robust and the NPA coverage at 86.30 and capital adequacy at 15.39 in particular, shows remarkable stability in the financials.

"Growth in deposits has been a bit off which has resulted in reliance on costly borrowings. Growth in the investment portfolio too has not been in sync with the rest of the balance sheet," Ayoub said, adding "With core economic sectors showing signs of recovery and stable fundamentals, the bank seems well placed to register a very positive growth in the coming financial year."

The business community in the Valley also feels that the new working method and digital transformation journey of the bank has benefited the traders and other entrepreneurs.

President, Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCC&I), Javid Ahmad Tenga said that the bank's dealing with the traders is improving.

"The bank is now disciplined and the process is going on. There are some issues that we will take up with the higher authorities. We're hopeful that they will be addressed," Tenga added.

He suggested the bank to empower branch heads and



zonal heads to take call on overdraft facilities to its customers. He also said that there should be the facility of one time settlement (OTS) scheme for the traders as well.

Sources said, the bank has introduced Straight Through Process (STP), extended branches, revamped credit structures, improved the customer care call system and established large credit units, popularly known as LCUs – across all Zones.

Sources further said that J&K bank has financed 96000 youth in the "Back to village" programme of the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha led dispensation in a year.

Commenting upon the annual numbers, MD & CEO Baldev Prakash said, "With historic yearly profit, highest-ever quarterly net, decadal high CRAR, best asset-quality figures over last 8 years; it's a great feeling to deliver better-than-promised annual numbers. I feel completely satisfied to see that we have gotten better at operating our business efficiently."

"Looking back to March 2022 with these sets of numbers, I see an unmistakable shift in performance as well as the functioning of the Bank. Right from financials, operations and business to compliance and vastly improved corporate governance, the leap from turn-around to transformation is quite perceptible as well as promising," he added.

However, the sources said that auditors were 'unhappy' with rationalizing audit expenses.

"Because it hasn't served them any benefits and they have kept the financial result questionable," they added.

The people questioning the methods used in declaring financial results, the official said, have now pleaded for intervention from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The sources said that the auditors have put a "qualification" on the financial results and that the Employees Stock Purchase Scheme (ESPS) implementation needs to be looked at.

"Bank sought the opinion of a leading law firm that has opined that the bank's version is justified. But as a precautionary measure the bank has not taken the amount of ESPS amounting to some 300 crores into account in the balance sheet that would otherwise further strengthen the CRAR," sources said.

Municipal Committee Handwara Demolishes 'Illegal' Under-construction Shopping Complex

Agencies

HANDWARA: Municipal Committee Handwara demolished an 'illegal' under-construction shopping complex, coming up within the township, on Tuesday, official sources said.

They told a local news agency GNS that an under-construction shopping complex on the land with Khasra number 1464, 65, 66, 67 and 71 was demolished by the Municipal Committee Handwara after people flagged concern over its alleged

illegal construction within the Municipal limits.

"Taking cognizance of the concern expressed by people, the Municipal Committee swung into action and razed the structure to ground today", they said.

The Municipal Committee concerned, the sources said, have dealt a stern warning to the public to refrain from involving themselves in any sort of construction without prior permission from the relevant offices.

Electrocuted Labourer Succumbs To Injuries After 4 Days

Agencies

SRINAGAR: A labourer injured in an electrocution incident last week at Dilbagh area in Lolab of north Kashmir's Kupwara, has succumbed at a hospital here on Tuesday morning.

An official told GNS that Aadil Ahmad Sheikh of Thundooa Lolab and Aijaz Ahmad Mir of Chrali Gund Lalpora were hospitalized with injuries after receiving an electric shock at Dilbagh area in Lolab on Friday last when an iron pole they were erecting, touched a high-

tension electric wire overhead.

The duo was evacuated from the site to SDH Sogam, from where both of them were referred to District Hospital Handwara for preferential treatment.

"Among the injured, Aadil Ahmad Sheikh was further referred to SKIMS Soura, where he succumbed this morning", the official said.

When contacted, a police official told GNS that they have already registered a case in this regard with investigations going on.



Inter District Sports
Tourney Begins At Srinagar

Observer News Service
SRINAGAR: The Department of Youth Services and Sports J&K under its initiative of tapping and channelizing sports talent in youth and students kick started a mega inter-district tournament in Badminton, Chess, Carrom, Basketball and Tug of War at Indoor Stadium Polo Ground here on Tuesday.
The tourney was declared open by Director YSS Subash C Chhibber. He was accompa-

nied by Joint Director Kashmir YSS Waseem Raja. Director YSS emphasised on the importance of engaging youth in games and sports while highlighting its countless benefits for the overall development of youth in general and students in particular.
District Youth Services and Sports Office Srinagar hosted the competitions for Under-19 boys. Players from all 10 Districts of the Kashmir Province are participating.

Inter Division Sports Events
Commence In Jammu



Observer News Service
JAMMU: An Inter-Division UT Level sports competition for Under-19 boys and girls in 10 disciplines kick-started on Tuesday at M.A. Stadium here.
The event was inaugurated by the Joint Director Youth Services & Sports Jammu, Suram Chand Sharma.
The competitions are being

held for Kabaddi, Chess, Yoga, Handball, Basket-Ball, Kho-Kho, Gymnastic, Wrestling, Weight Lifting and Shooting. Athletes from all 20 Districts of J&K are participating in the competition and the winner(s) of each discipline would qualify for participation in the National Games being organised by School Games Federation of India from 5th of June 2023 in New Delhi.

IPL 2023: MI Take On
LSG In 2nd Qualifier



Press Trust of India
CHENNAI: The batting unit finally clicking and a rather dramatic entry into the IPL play-offs will make Mumbai Indians a more confident side when they meet the plucky Lucknow Super Giants in the Eliminator here on Wednesday.
Mumbai Indians have a come a long from their woeful performance last year, when they came up with one of their worst showings in IPL, finishing last.
Having come this far in IPL 2023 after Gujarat Titans did them a good turn by defeating Royal Challengers Bangalore and pitch-forking the five-time champions into the Eliminator against Lucknow Super Giants, the Rohit Sharma-led side would like to make the most of the proverbial 'life' to go the distance and win their sixth title.
Lucknow Super Giants would know all too well that they were eliminated at the same stage last year by RCB after being one of the most dominating sides.
They have looked a cohesive side despite the absence of regular skipper KL Rahul but the way Krunal Pandya has tactfully marshalled his resources would once again be crucial as they meet the most successful IPL side that seems to have found its mojo after striking success at the back-end of the tournament.
One cannot overestimate the contribution of tall Australian all-rounder Cameron Green, who smacked an unbeaten century to help MI win their last league game against Sunrisers Hyderabad before GT defeated RCB.
Green (381 runs), along with a resurgent Suryakumar Yadav (511 runs, one century, four fifties), skipper Rohit (313) and Ishan Kishan (439), will be their key batters when they taken on LGS in the do-or-die clash.
With Mumbai's batting puzzle finally falling in place, LSG bowlers will be aware that they have a task on hand to contain the likes of Rohit and Co. if they get going.
Here, leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi will have a big role to play if the team hopes to keep MI in check.
Bishnoi (16 wickets from 14 matches) has been the leading bowler for LSG and he would be skipper Krunal's go-to bowler. But it would also be important for the likes of Naveen-ul-Haq and Avesh Khan, besides Krunal himself and veteran Amit Mishra, to step up.
LSG's batting has clicked despite the absence of Rahul and they qualified for the play-offs rather comfortably with Marcus Stoinis (368 runs, 14 matches) coming to the fore with his big-hitting.
Kyle Mayers (361 runs) and Nicholas Pooran (358) have brought the Caribbean flair and been vital cogs in LSG's performance. How they fare at the Chepauk, which has often thrown up slowish pitches, would have a bearing on the outcome of the match.
Mumbai Indians would like to utilise the experience of Piyush Chawla -- the unlikely hero in the bowling department with 20 wickets so far -- while Jason Behrendorff (14) has done a decent job whenever called up. Their value to the side can't be overemphasised, more so in a crunch game.
Match starts: 7.30 pm.

7 Arrested In Spain Over
Vinicius Jr. Racial Abuse

Agencies
MADRID: Seven people accused of racially abusing Real Madrid player Vinicius Junior have been arrested in Spain, police said Tuesday.
Three were detained in Valencia for alleged abuse against Vinicius in a Spanish league match on Sunday. Four were arrested in Madrid for allegedly hanging an effigy of the player off a highway bridge in January.
The arrests come after an outpouring of support for Vinicius after he said he was abused in Valencia. The case prompted widespread reaction from sports

hanged by the neck on the morning of a derby match between Real Madrid and Atletico Madrid in the Copa del Rey. Along with it was a banner with the words "Madrid hates Real."
The perpetrators used a black figure with Vinicius' name on it, tied a rope around its neck and hanged it from an overpass while still dark in the Spanish capital.
Police said three of those arrested belonged to one of Atletico's fan groups, and the other was a follower of the group. Some had prior bookings with police for other crimes.
The hate message on the ban-



figures and government officials in Spain and worldwide.
The nation has been criticized for its lack of action in racism cases in soccer. Brazilian government officials, including President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, had publicly expressed their concerns.
Vinicius, who is Black, has been subjected to repeated racist taunts since he arrived in Spain five years ago, and especially this season after he began celebrating his goals by dancing.
The Brazilian has heavily criticized Spanish soccer for not doing more to stop racism.
The match against Valencia was temporarily stopped after Vinicius said a fan behind one of the goals called him a monkey and made monkey gestures toward him. Vinicius considered leaving the field but eventually continued playing.
The effigy of Vinicius was ner is often used by Atletico's hardcore fans, though at the time they denied being responsible for the display.
The men arrested are between the ages of 19 and 24. Authorities said some were previously identified during matches considered at high risk of violence. Police showed images of them arriving in handcuffs and escorted by agents on Tuesday.
Spanish media said police had used security cameras to identify the perpetrators but no action had been taken until now. Police did not say if the timing of the arrests had to do with the widespread attention being received by the latest abuse against Vinicius on Sunday.
The lights at the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro were turned off Monday night in a show of solidarity for Vinicius. (AP)

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