

Jammu & Kashmir Update

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"Nobody remembers who came 'second'"

— Charles Schulz



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Thought of the Month:

If you do not think about future,
You cannot have one

John Gale

From Editors desk

JAMMU and Kashmir Update is a unique initiative of Ministry of Home Affairs to showcase the positive developments taking place in the State. The ambit of the magazine covers all the three regions of the state with focus on the achievements of people.

To make it participatory, the magazine invites success stories/ unique achievements, along with photographs in the field of sports, adventure sports, studies, business, art, culture, positive welfare initiatives, social change, religious harmony, education including pieces of art like drawings, cartoons, poems, short stories (not more than 150 words) or jokes on post Box No. 30, New Delhi, GPO, New Delhi- 110001. Selected ones will be published in J&K Update.

Smile



Teacher: When was Rome built?

Student: At night, sir

Teacher: Who told you that?

Student: You did, Sir. You once said Rome was not built in a day

Culture



Culture of J&K encompasses a rich and distinct heritage comprising the music, dance, festivals, literature, food habit and myriad other qualities. In a way, it is a state with Kaleidoscopic culture that has influence of Buddhism, Sufism and Hinduism. While Buddhist chant reverberate the mountains of Ladakh, Sufiana Kalam rules the vale of Kashmir. The Dogra Pahari of Jammu dance to "Geetru" during festival times. Ladakh is known for its unique Indo-Tibetan culture, while Jammu's Dogra culture and tradition is very similar to that of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. The culture of Kashmir is direct blend of South Asian (Northern part) as well as Central Asian culture, which amalgamates Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Buddhist philosophy.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir are very fond of celebrating festivals. Eid, Shivaratri and Buddhist festivals are celebrated with gaiety, in which people of all faith participate with equal fervour. The mass dance festival of Ladakh, Chaitr Chaudash festival of Jammu, Bhand Pather (a folk theatre style play and dance performed during social and cultural functions) of Kashmir etc. all give the different regions of J&K a unique identity.

Arts and crafts of the state are very classy and so is the food. Woven carpets, silk carpets, rugs, woollen shawls, pottery etc. are world famous. 'Kahwa' and 'Noon Chai' are very popular among the Kashmiris. Curds and condiments are common ingredients of Kashmiri cuisine. The cuisine of Ladakh is almost similar to that of Tibet, while those of Kashmir have Iranian flavour. The language of J&K is very unique among the modern Indo-Aryan languages. Kashmiri is of Dardi and Shina source with considerable influence of Persian and Sanskrit languages. Other important languages include Dogri, Ladakhi, Pashto, Gojri, Balti, Urdu and Pahari.

To promote its rich culture and tradition, a two-day Tourism-cum-Cultural Festival 2014 was held recently. While inaugurating the event, former union health minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad said, "The festival was started with a motive to educate the students and the people about the rich culture and tradition, besides boosting the tourism activities in the region". Various colourful and scintillating performances, depicting the culture and traditions of Jammu and Kashmir state in general, and Bhaderwah in particular, were performed by the school children and local artists.

UDAAN'S FLIGHT AND FEEDBACK

Udaan is the perfect scheme initiated by the J&K Govt. This Scheme provides great opportunities for the youth of J&K to show their talent to the outside world. College to corporate was a wonderful experience. I learned a lot in the corporate world right from technical to behavioural skills. I really appreciate the staff of SHAHI EXPORTS PVT LTD. For the support they gave me during the training period. The biggest challenge for me was to learn Kannada language in a short time, as company was to place me in Bengaluru after training. I am thankful that J&K Govt. has started this Scheme for the upliftment of the J&K Youth.

My message to all the young and talented youth of J&K is to participate in the Scheme, as opportunities

are created not found. If J&K Govt. and NSDC is providing such a great platform to youth to show their talent it is for the youth to grab it, have faith in the Scheme and in the company have patience because good things come to those who wait. There is a very old saying "we get opportunities if other do not grab them" here is the opportunities, lets grab it and create one's own world of success.



Gurpreet Singh

Selection Drive Schedule for Udaan Project in August 2014

Udaan Partners Rooman Technologies, Apollo Skills, Shrishti, Shahi Exports, Genpact, 247, Pinkerton, Accenture, Srei e Sehej, Renault Nissan, Holiday Inn, Residency Group, ONGC, Learning Links. For more details please visit www.nsdcudaan.com

TOURISM

Summer festival in valley to boost tourism

To promote and revive tourism in Jammu and Kashmir, a nine-day long summer festival was organized in Srinagar city recently. The



event was aimed at attracting tourists by showcasing the heritage, handicrafts, folk music, cultural programmes and other traditional activities of the Kashmir Valley, besides recreational activities. Held under the aegis of State Tourism Department, the focus was on adventure, eco-tourism, art and culture as the valley has favourable weather conditions as compared to other parts of the country.

"Any tourist who comes to Kashmir certainly visits Dal Lake. Hence, this festival was organised on the banks of the Dal Lake. We had included activities like archery, hot air ballooning and 7D theatres. We aim to promote tourism through a summer festival," said Tariq Hussain, Assistant



Director of the Department of Tourism, Jammu and Kashmir.

Adventure activities like trekking, paragliding, rafting, cycling, archery, canoeing and kayaking were held during the festival. Special events were also organized for children.

"We were going into our hotel rooms, but, when we saw a children zone, we stopped here. We enjoyed it a lot. Kids enjoyed the festival. All the activities especially the cultural programmes were very nice," said a tourist, Swati.

Dal Lake is often referred to as 'Srinagar's jewel', and is visited by millions of tourists every year, bringing in huge profits through rowing boats, famed houseboats and hotels close to its banks.

Jammu and Kashmir is regarded as one of the popular tourist destinations in the country, with the hospitality of the valley being well known.

Prime Minister flags-off Katra-Udhampur train, inaugurates hydropower project in Uri



Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged-off the inaugural train from Katra, the base camp of the Vaishno Devi Temple, to Udhampur and also inaugurated a Hydropower project in Uri in the valley.

“I want to assure not only the people of Jammu, but the whole nation, that our priority will be to modernize railway stations of metro lines, including Jammu city, so that the facilities available will be at par with airports,” said the Prime Minister after flagging-off the train from Katra.



Suggesting that the train be named as the Shreeshakti Express, the Prime Minister said that the train was a gift not just for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, but also for the rest of the country.

Katra, being the starting point of the trek to Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, is a highly revered destination for pilgrims. The rail link will make the journey easier for millions of devotees who make the pilgrimage every year. It took 12 years and over Rs.1,132 crore to construct the 25-kilometer-long railway line in the hilly region of the valley. The train passes through 10 tunnels and 36 bridges.

The Prime Minister later inaugurated the 240 Megawatt Uri-II hydropower project in the state. This is the second power project on river Jhelum in Uri area in Baramulla District and is located downstream of the 480-MW Uri-I project, which is already operational. The Prime Minister, while referring to the two inaugurations, said that the rail connectivity will provide speed and the power project will provide energy to the state.

Cross-LoC traders get ISD facility

A meeting was recently held at Srinagar to discuss the various issues pertaining to Cross LoC Trade and Travel. The meeting was attended by Shri K.A. Ganai, State Financial Commissioner of Industries and Commerce; Shri R.K. Srivastava, Joint Secretary (J&K Affairs), MHA; various other officers from the State Government and representatives from the Traders side.

In the above meeting, various issues relating to Cross LoC Trade and Travel were taken up viz. Review of the “Agreed List of items”, banking facility at TFCs, communication facilities, enhancement of cash amount to be carried by passengers across LoC, security related matters,

Infrastructure Development at TFCs etc. In order to boost the Cross LoC trade and travel, it was agreed to take immediate concrete steps on the above issues

taken up in the meeting. With regards to Communication facilities, it was agreed that ISD facilities needed to be provided to the officers and Trade Associations directly dealing with the Cross LoC trade. Besides, the





ISD numbers so provided to Federation Chamber of Industries, Kashmir, Kashmir Chamber of Commerce

and Industry, Srinagar and Chamber of Commerce & Industry Jammu, shall be re-activated.

“This facility would benefit our traders because we don’t have this facility which PoK traders have. It would enhance trade and we can now call them anytime to confirm the rates, which will surely benefit traders” said a Cross LoC trader Mohammad Javid Khan.

Cross LoC Trade between Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) was started in October 2008.

Festival on aromatic plants held in Srinagar

A six-day festival to highlight the income generating potential of indigenous aromatic and medicinal plants in the state, was held in Srinagar recently. The Kashmir Lavender Festival held at the Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM) brought farmers, traders and industrialists, involved with aromatic products, onto one platform to discuss business potential from plants like lavender, rose and rosemary.



Institute Director Dr. Vishwakarma said that the aim of the festival was to generate awareness about the market value of these plants that existed nowhere else in the country, and the employment opportunities in this business.

“Farmers should know the value of Kashmir-based aroma plants. The industrialists should know about the technology and value addition. Industrial culture

should develop based on aroma products of Kashmir valley. This was the aim. These plants that exist here exist nowhere else. The value for them in the international market will be very good. It can lead to employment generation. Young people will get opportunities. This is only the beginning,” said Dr. Vishwakarma. Participants at the festival saw this as a

great opportunity for future growth.

“This is a good step that is already happening in foreign countries and is happening for the first time in India. We will get other opportunities in the future as well. People will get aware, tourism will be developed and this trade of medicinal aromatic plants will get boosted,” said a participant, Hamid.

The event also featured guided tours of farms, a demonstration of the technologies used to create products along with a landscape painting workshop.



Girls in valley prove their mettle in soccer

Taking a plunge, girls in the valley are all set to prove their mettle in the game of soccer as the really held FIFA World Cup in Brazil has gripped youth across the globe. An under-19 girls team recently took part in an open soccer tournament in Srinagar. The event was organized by the Football Association of the state.

This was the first time that a football tournament was organised exclusively for college girls of the valley in a bid to expose them to international standards.



“The football association has organized this open tournament. The girls have done better this time. They are getting letters from different states for their participation but, the number of well trained girls is still less, so, we cannot send them as of now. This year we are conducting this tournament, I hope will train them after the month of Ramadan, so that we can prepare sub-junior and junior football teams,” said Mohammad Abdullah Dar, organizer and secretary of Football Association of Jammu and Kashmir.

The girls said they were thrilled to play the nerve-breaking sport in a cricket crazy nation. They said, we have been working hard during the practice sessions to break the supremacy of boys in the sport of football. We want to participate and improve in this sport. “It’s very common for girls to play sports like tennis, badminton, but soccer is something new. We want to be much better than boys in this sport,” said a player, Farhana Butt. The enthusiasm of girls on field is refreshing, as it can be a launching pad for their sporting careers.



DO YOU KNOW

The first FIFA world cup under an authoritarian Government was held in Italy in 1934.

The first FIFA world cup goal was scored by Lucien Laurent.

India won its first men’s hockey world cup championship in 1975 in Kuala Lumpur

Special measures for J&K in Union Budget

A slew of measures were announced for Jammu and Kashmir in Union Budget 2014-15 presented by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on July 10. The minister announced Rs. 500 crores for re-settlements of Kashmiri Pandits, an IIT in Jammu, a solar power project in Ladakh and new sports facilities in the state. The Centre will provide Rs. 200 crore to upgrade indoor and outdoor stadiums to international standards in Jammu and in Kashmir valley. Jaitley also proposed to launch Pashmina Promotion Programme and a programme for the development of other crafts of Jammu and Kashmir with a sum of Rs. 500 crore earmarked for the same in the budget.

Workshop on Disaster Management

A two-day workshop was held in Srinagar to devise a comprehensive strategy to deal with any natural calamity and capacity building to ensure effective as well as quick human resource response to any disaster. The aim was to formulate an efficient, effective and comprehensive Disaster Management plan for the state. The seminar to draft on Jammu and Kashmir State Disaster Management Plan (JKSDMP) was organised in collaboration with Mumbai-based TATA Institute of Social Sciences. The plan undertakes is to deal with the management of natural calamities like earthquakes, cloudburst, flash floods, avalanche and landslides, snow blizzards, wind storms, fire and drought.

Muslims observe holy Ramzan in Jammu and Kashmir

Muslims across Jammu and Kashmir observed Ramzan, the holy month of prayer and fasting. In the valley large number of people visited mosques to offer prayers to the Almighty. The younger generation also joined their elders and kept a fast and went to mosques for prayers.

The sale of dates surges during the holy month as varieties of dates imported from various Arabian countries tempt buyers with their rich taste and high nutritional content.

Breaking the days fast with a date is believed to be 'Sunna' or practice of the Prophet. The fruit is consumed more by devout Muslims while breaking their dawn to dusk fast. "Dates are very popular in the state during this

Environment awareness for kids

A trekking tour for school children was organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Skiing and Mountaineering Association and the Tourism Department in a bid to make children aware about keeping their surroundings clean, besides leading a healthy life style. Around 250 students from different schools participated in the "Know My City" event. Children trekked to the Shankaracharya Hill, which rises above the world renowned Dal Lake located in the heart of Srinagar City. The hill, with the height of 1,000 feet, is the highest point from where the city of Srinagar can be viewed fully. Apart from trekking, participants also collected garbage dumped en route to the hill.

State government lays emphasis on tourism promotion

While addressing a meeting of Tourism Advisory Committee in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah laid emphasis on making tourism attractive for investors in the state and also to enhance economic growth. He also expressed satisfaction over the increased tourism in the state as over one million tourists came to Kashmir Valley during the last three years. The state has potential in religious, adventure and sport tourism which generates good economic activities for people.



month. The markets are flooded with dates. You would find dates in every Muslim household and the demand is very high. Traders get dates from Arab countries to sell in India", said a buyer, Ashiq Ahmad.

Locals also give alms and contribute to charity during this month. With an economically affluent middle-class, Kashmiris now contribute in a major way.

Amarnath Yatra attracts record number of devotees

Over one lakh pilgrims, including women and sadhus, have paid obeisance at the Amarnath cave shrine since the pilgrimage commenced at the end of June. The yatra began on June 28 when Jammu and Kashmir's Tourism Minister Ghulam Ahmad Mir flagged off the first batch of 950 pilgrims for Baltal from Jammu. Security remains tight on various routes to ensure the safety of the devotees.

A pilgrim, Swatantra Gupta, said that the power of Shiva motivated them to proceed on the difficult path to the shrine. "Some paths are difficult which pose a problem because we live in the plains. But then, it is because of the power of Shiva, we will reach the shrine chanting his name 'Jai Bhole' throughout the way," said Gupta.

Another pilgrim, Ram Bahu, said, "Pilgrims are walking with great enthusiasm. I am feeling very good. People are chanting 'Bhole Bhole, Bum Bum Bhole'. It feels great. There is a lot of devotional fervour for Lord Shiva."

Keen volunteers set up community kitchens providing free food, temporary shelter and medical care in a bid to help devotees.

President of a religious organisation 'Baba Barfani Sewa Mandal', Chander Sheikher Sood, said that various kitchens enroute to Amarnath are being run



by his volunteers and arrangements for nearly 5,000 pilgrims have been made. "There are lot of facilities for the pilgrims who come here. We understand that the pilgrims have less money. The people who come here are served free and we serve them with our hearts," he added.

Pilgrims said they were happy with the arrangements made for them and their journey was made easier through the efforts of the volunteers and other local helps.

"There are a lot of community kitchens that have been set up ahead of Lakhenpur. The food is good and there are lots of facilities for the pilgrims. All preparations are good. People from all religions get the same food and sit together to have it. There is no discrimination," said a pilgrim, Chinky.

Such is the faith of the devout Hindus that despite inclement weather, records are broken year after year as far as the number of pilgrims is concerned, which is increasing with each passing year.

The pilgrims trek daily through icy streams and frozen mountain passes to 3,800 metres (12,700 feet) high Amarnath cave shrine, to worship an ice stalagmite, believed to be the symbol of Lord Shiva, the Hindu God of destruction and regeneration.

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