

Jammu & Kashmir Update

Vol.V, No.12, December , 2013

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Facilities improve at Srinagar's Lal Ded Hospital

The Jammu and Kashmir Government recognizes the importance of health in improving the quality of life of people, and has a multi-pronged strategy to upgrade healthcare infrastructure and provide affordable and accessible medical aid to people across the state.

In one of its recent initiatives, it has increased the number of beds in the recovery and labour units of Lal Ded Hospital in Srinagar by 130. This is expected to reduce overcrowding at the hospital.

The Lal Ded Hospital is the region's premier maternal healthcare institute, and attracts hundreds of patients on a daily basis from all parts of the valley.

At times, this heavy inflow of patients results in overcrowding, and a shortage of facilities.

The bed capacity of the recovery room at the hospital has been upgraded by 60 (from 80 to 140) and the capacity in the labour room has been increased by 70 (from 40 to 110).

The Minister for Medical Education, Youth Services and Sports, Taj Mohiuddin, inaugurated the facilities recently.

Speaking on the occasion, he said bed congestion at the hospital has been greatly minimised.

The minister also inaugurated a gynaecology museum at the hospital - a

first in the state - which has on display rare and unusual surgical objects used previously at various hospitals. The museum also has on display instruments and microscopes previously used in surgeries.

The minister added that all possible efforts will be made to facilitate the availability of equipment required for taking care of patients' needs at the hospital.

The Jammu and Kashmir Government is working hard to bring about a radical change in the state's health system and in the health status of its people.

Its constant efforts are paying off, as healthcare is improving by the day.

Kashmir hosts national boxing event



The 20th senior men and 8th senior women North India Boxing Championships were held for the first time in the history of boxing in Kashmir, recently.

It was organized by the Indian Boxing Association in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Boxing Association at the Sher-i-Kashmir Indoor Stadium in Srinagar.

Around 115 boxers, both male and female, from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh and Jammu and Kashmir participated in the event.

"This is the first time that the event was held in Kashmir and the organisers made very good arrangements. We want to motivate youth to take up boxing and do well in the sport," said Balbir Kaur, a participant.

President, J&K Boxing Association (JKBA), Tariq Hameed Karra, said the holding of the national event in Kashmir was a major achievement for sports and sports lovers of the region.

He also said that greater attention is being paid to developing boxing and other sports disciplines at the grass-root level in Kashmir, so that talented young sportspersons can earn laurels



Drive to clean Jhelum

Many people participated in a recent three-day cleanliness drive in Srinagar to restore the glory of the Jhelum River.

The drive was initiated by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation in collaboration with the J&K Ski & Mountaineering Association and Adventure Tour Operators Association of Kashmir.

Volunteers representing different institutions and organizations took part in drive and helped in the removal of garbage, waste and dead animals.

“The river banks of Jhelum are polluted, so, we have started this campaign to clean the area. We appeal to the people not to throw garbage into the river and along the river banks,” said Secretary, Housing and Urban Development

Department, Satish Nehru.

A public awareness campaign was also launched during the drive.

The River Jhelum rises from a spring at Verinag, situated in the foothills of Pir Panjal Range, and meanders from South to North Kashmir to the Wullar Lake, Asia’s largest fresh water lake, before flowing into Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.

The river considered to be the lifeline of Kashmir, has been affected by pollution and encroachments. The accumulation of silt deposit and garbage along the banks has worried environmentalists about the river shrinking in size.

The cleanliness drive was welcomed by citizens of the city.

Henna Syed, a teenager, expressed concern over rising pollution, and said the need of the hour was to spread awareness among the people.

“It is our responsibility to keep our environment clean, so, we should look after the river banks, as this is not the responsibility of SMC only, it is our responsibility too,” said Syed.

People and organisations that took part in the drive stressed that such campaigns should be held in the future as well to restore the beauty and splendour of the River Jhelum.

Authorities believe the cleanliness drive of the River Jhelum, which passes through the heart of Srinagar city, will give a boost to tourism in the valley, as the river is a part of various recreational activities.

for the state, both at the national and international level.

Minister for Medical Education, Youth Services & Sports, Taj Mohiuddin, who was the chief guest at the concluding event, distributed prizes among the winners.

Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP) won eleven medals, including one gold, one silver and nine bronze medals in the championship.

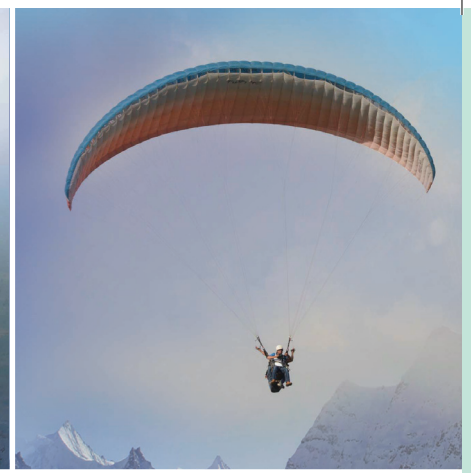
Khalida Bano won a gold medal for the state, while Asha Jamwal bagged silver. The bronze medals were won by Shahnaz Akhter, Anju, Raman

Sharma, Anju Bala, Zahid, Sarfraz Choudary, Stanzin, Maryam Manzoor and Praveen Manhas.

Addressing the gathering, the minister said boxers from the state had shown good potential and the state government would provide more facilities for them.

The Jammu and Kashmir Government is committed to promoting sports among youth to help them positively channelise their energies and hone their skills, so that they can compete with the best at the national and international level.





Paragliding festival held to boost adventure tourism, generate employment

A nine-day Paragliding Festival, organised by the Department of Tourism, was held recently on the outskirts of Srinagar at Dara.

The festival, the first of its kind, focused on promoting paragliding as a sport and a source of employment generation for youth of the state.

It was inaugurated by the state's Tourism Minister, Ghulam Ahmad Mir, who said that paragliding was one of the latest entries in the list of adventure sports in the state, and the beautiful mountains, lakes and valleys of the region made it a perfect place for paragliding.

“Adventure sports have a lot of potential. Till now, the only place where paragliding is done in the northern region of the country is in the Kangra Valley in Himachal Pradesh. But, our Dara Valley is much more beautiful

than the Kangra Valley,” said Mir.

The event attracted many participants from across the country.

“This place is very good for paragliding. The take-off is very good, and the most important thing, the landing, is smooth. At other places, the landing ground is small, so landing becomes tough,” said Mukesh, a participant.

The minister added that the Department of Tourism has identified more locations suitable for paragliding, and urged youth of the state to take up such sports which have the potential to attract more tourists and generate employment.

“We are trying to train local youth so that they take up this adventure sport as a profession. Till recently, tourism meant that visitors came here, stayed in hotels, enjoyed Wazwaan (Kashmiri cuisine) and went back... That

was tourism for us. Now, the world has changed. People still like to visit beautiful places, but they also want adventure sports like trekking, rafting and paragliding,” he said.

The minister said the tourism department would support, provide training and financial assistance to youth interested in taking up paragliding as a profession. And, he asked the youth of the region to come forward and benefit from these schemes.

Several initiatives have been taken by the state government to develop infrastructure to make the region a top international tourist destination.

And, in an effort to promote the valley as a destination for adventure activities, the government has been participating in travel marts and travel festivals at the national and international level.



Kashmiri farmers welcome construction of

Efforts are being made by the state government to boost agricultural growth and productivity through a variety of interventions, including providing better irrigation facilities to farmers.

Consequently, schemes for irrigation are receiving appropriate attention.

Recently, a water reservoir was constructed in the foothills of mountains in Dooru, some 25 kilometers away from Anantang.

It will help farmers of Dooru and adjoining villages, who face problems during dry summer months when water is not available for irrigating fields.

“There are five villages here Dooru, Nathipora, Mehmoodabad, Kreri and Nowpora, which were facing problems in the summer months as the canal is almost dry and has very little water. The government has ensured that water is set aside for these villages,” said Assistant Executive Engineer, Irrigation Department Dooru, Mukhtar Ahmad Dar.

The government had spent Rupees 669 lakhs on this project.

Farmers from the area have welcomed the construction of the reservoir, as it will help in increasing crop yield.

“It is important, as farming can only be done when there is water. Now,



Kashmir's hi-tech forensic science lab fully functional now

The new state of the art and full-fledged Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) at Bemina on the periphery of Srinagar, is now fully functional.

The complex has been constructed at a cost of about Rs.11 crore and will be of enormous help in investigations and disposal of crime-related cases.

Fast clearance of cases by the lab will give impetus to investigations and shorten the process of delivering justice.

“Now, we have the required infrastructure for all tests. Efforts are on for DNA testing, voice identification system and opening of three to four divisions to ensure that cyber crime investigations can be speeded up,” said Muneer Ahmad, an employee of the FSL.

“We have an explosive’s division, a CNT division, a toxicology division, a ballistic division, a finger-print division and a documents division. We have many divisions, as crime has taken various forms, and we have to

be well equipped with the latest technology to deal with it,” said Showkat Ahmad, a biological officer at the FSL.

The Directorate of Forensic Science Services of the Union Home Ministry has sanctioned Rs. 83 lakh for the creation of two central forensic mobile units, one each at Srinagar and Jammu.

Director of the FSL, Inayat Ahmad Khan, said the government has modernisation plans of creating new divisions of brain mapping, computer cyber crime, Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid (DNA) profiling and voice identification, to make FSL services more credible and effective in the state.

The laboratory complex was inaugurated earlier by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Forensic science is a discipline that applies scientific analysis to the justice system, often, to help prove the events of a crime. Forensic scientists take samples collected at the crime scene and analyze them in a forensics laboratory that helps law enforcement agencies in their investigations.

These laboratories contain almost all aspects of forensic science in one place, where skilled scientists and specialists focus on specific areas, and work together to unravel and solve crimes.

of water reservoir

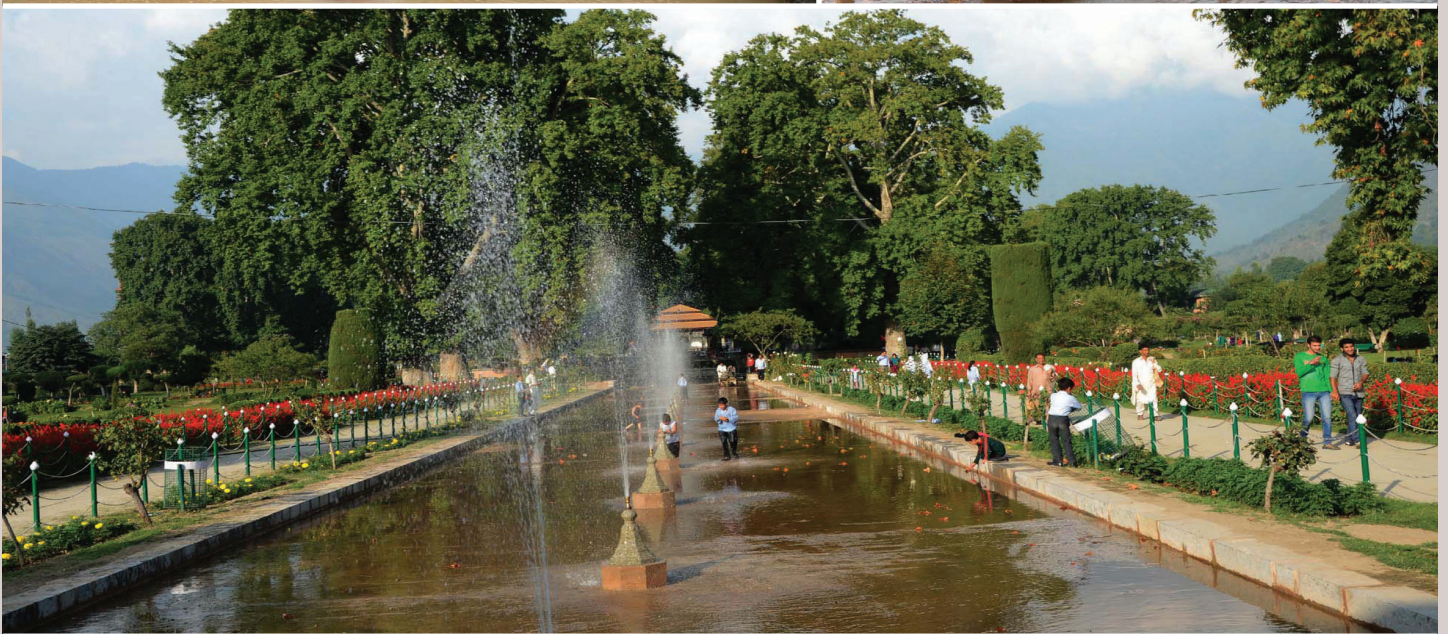
farmers will not face problems, as whenever they face water shortage for irrigation, they can take water from here, and they will get good crops,” said Mohammad Akhtar, a farmer.

The government started the construction of the water reservoir three years ago with the aim of helping people of the area.

To maintain cleanliness and hygiene, the reservoir is surrounded by a proper fence to prevent animals from entering the enclosure.

Agriculture is the backbone of Jammu and Kashmir’s economy, and around 80 per cent of its population is dependent on it for their livelihood.





Shalimar Bagh gets a facelift

Safeguarding of heritage sites, including the world famous Mughal Gardens, is a major concern of the government.

Shalimar Bagh, a famous Mughal Garden on the banks of Dal Lake in Srinagar, was built by Mughal Emperor Jahangir for his wife Nur Jahan, in 1619.

It is in the nominated list of UNESCO world heritage sites.

It recently underwent renovation, with the main focus being restoration of water channels.

“We are using materials used by the Mughals for renovation of the garden. We are renovating the entire garden,

especially the water channels, under the guidance of our consultant. Water channels need more attention, as they are not in good condition,” said Sunil Misri, Director, Floriculture Department.

According to a resident of Srinagar, Shalimar Bagh is not the same without its fountains.

“The renovation work in Shalimar Bagh is very important, because without its water channels, the garden is not so beautiful. Whenever anyone wants to visit the garden, they first thing they ask is - are water channels functioning? If they get a positive response, then they visit the garden. The government has taken a good step as

the channels were in bad condition,” said Gulam Ahmad Bhat.

A tourist from Singapore said that she could imagine Mughal rulers taking long walks in the garden when she visited the historic site.

“What strikes us are the flowers and the water channels. So, you have to think about the days of old, when the king and queen enjoyed their afternoon breaks in the pavilion,” said Singaporean tourist Laiky.

The garden is very popular with tourists and is visited by thousands of visitors throughout the year, and its renovation is also aimed at attracting tourists.



All India Postal Cricket Tournament hosted by J&K

The 27th edition of the All India Postal Cricket Tournament was held in Srinagar recently for the first time ever.

More than 220 players and officials representing 13 teams from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Odhisa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and host Jammu and Kashmir participated in the tournament.

The matches were held at the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium, the Kashmir University Cricket Stadium and the Islamia College Cricket Stadium.

The five-day long tournament was inaugurated by Taj Mohi-u-Din, Minister for Medical Education, Youth Services and Sports, Jammu and Kashmir, in an impressive function held at the Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium.

Chandra Prakash, the Chief Post Master General of Jammu and Kashmir, said cricket is extremely popular in the state and the objective of holding the tournament was to give a fillip to the sport in the region.

“Cricket is a very popular game in the state ... the tournament will boost the morale of local cricketers and give them wide exposure,” he said. He added that the event would also showcase the state as an excellent destination for sports and tourism.

The players welcomed the initiative, and said such events give them both exposure and an opportunity to interact with players from other states.

“It has many advantages. We benefit as cricketers and also in terms of appreciating different cultures. We also get to know each other, and it strength-

ens bonds. Such tournaments should be held more often,” said Praveen Kumar, a cricketer representing the Delhi Circle team.

West Bengal won the tournament defeating Uttar Pradesh in the final. They scored 152 for eight in 20 overs and then rolled over Uttar Pradesh for 77 in 18 overs.

Hosts J&K reached the semi-final of the tournament for the first time. They finished fourth after they were beaten by Assam by nine wickets in the third-fourth place play-off match.

This is the third consecutive year that the Jammu and Kashmir Postal Circle has organised a national level sports event. The All India Postal Athletic Tournament was held in 2011, while the All India Postal Football Tournament was held in 2012.

From the desk of Editor

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, posi-

tive welfare initiatives, social change, religious harmony, education etc. The selected articles/stories will be published in the web version of the magazine and the best among them would be suitably rewarded. Decision of the Selectors in the regard would be final.

Interested person may send soft copy of their articles / stories along with their name, father's name, complete address, telephone number with STD code, email address to Jammuandkashmirupdate@gmail.com



Saffron Festival held to boost production and promote tourism

A three-day Saffron Festival, celebrating the arrival and harvesting of the crop, was held recently in Kashmir's Pampore District.

It aimed at boosting production of the crop, providing improved market access to farmers, and attracting more tourists to the state.

Minister for Agriculture, Ghulam Hassan Mir, and Minister for Tourism, G.A. Mir, jointly inaugurated the festival.

"Through this festival, we aim to create awareness about how saffron is produced, where it is produced, how it is produced, and by whom it is produced. Nowadays, people want to know all this. So, what we aim to do through this festival, is also to attract tourists in the month when saffron blooms," said Kashmir's Tourism Minister Ghulam Ahmad Mir.

Saffron farmers are happy with the steps taken by the state government.

"We want tourists from all over the world to come and see how our saffron, which is famous all over, is grown, and how much effort goes into growing it. If it is becoming expensive, then, what is the reason behind it. So, we want them to know all this. The Saffron Mission started by the Agriculture Department has helped in increasing saffron production," said a saffron grower, Riyaz Ahmed.

The festival attracted not just domestic, but foreign tourists as well.

"I think saffron is the most important product of the region, here in Kashmir, and it is also the most important spice in the world. I think that Kashmir's saffron is of the highest quality," said a visitor from Germany, Stephan Smith.

A number of cultural programmes were organised during the festival.

The government has decided to make the Saffron Festival an annual affair. It would be added to Kashmir's "tourism calendar" and held with a wider range of activities from next year.

Saffron, commonly considered one of the most expensive spices in the world at around Rs 1,500 for 10 grams, has been grown in Kashmir since the Mughal period, when saffron bulbs were brought from Iran. Cultivation is an elaborate and painstaking process: the flower's stigmas are hand-picked and sun-dried before they find their way to the market. It takes some 170,000 flowers to get a kilogram of saffron. The spice is used extensively in Mediterranean, Mexican and Indian cuisines.

RNI Regn. No. DELMUL/2010/35730

Printed by: Kalamantira at A - 31, Naraina Industrial Area, Phase -1, New Delhi-110028

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Published by: Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India