

Good Morning Kashmir

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Manoj Sinha
@manojsinha_



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.

G20 Tourism Working Group Summit

New era in J&K opens possibilities for growth, peace: LG Sinha

GMK News Network

SRINAGAR: Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that Jammu Kashmir is witnessing a new era that has opened limitless possibilities of growth and peace.

Addressing the meeting of the 3rd Tourism Working Group (TWG) of G20, the Lt Governor underlined why J&K was selected by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji for G20 meeting. He explained that Jammu Kashmir is witnessing a new era under the leadership of Hon'ble PM and it has opened up limitless possibilities of growth and peace.

"Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji through development schemes that empowers masses and Union Territory's effective administration isolated the terror eco-system 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," the Lt Governor said.

He also said that tourism in Jammu Kashmir is also a reflection of multi-religious and multi-cultural ethos of India.

The Lt Governor underlined the importance of peace for growth and tourism.

"Tourism cannot grow in isolation. The economics of it is fine, that tourism 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," the Lt Governor said. ●P-02

- **J&K will soon find its place in the top 50 destinations in the world**
- **Jammu Kashmir is witnessing a new era**
- **Tourism in JK a reflection of multi-cultural ethos**
- **Committed for people's prosperity both economically, socially**
- **J&K will soon find its place in the top 50 destinations in the world**



Office of LG J&K
@OfficeOfLGJandK

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 and laying foundation for even better prospects ahead.

Office of LG J&K
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In a very short span of time, we are advancing towards building a digital society. In 2022, Jammu Kashmir recorded 1.2 million e-transactions per day. In the first 4 month of 2023, we have recorded 2.3 million e-transactions which is higher than many other states.

Information & PR, J&K
@diprjk

Director Information J&K, Sh. Minga Sherpa gave a presentation during the event "Promoting Incredible India through Film Tourism", on the sidelines of 3rd TWG Meeting.

Terror ecosystem in J&K isolated through dev schemes: LG

Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday said that the global market and laying foundation for even better prospects ahead. Addressing the press conference at Raj Bhan here, the LG said that at present people of J&K are reaping the benefits of real democracy for the first time in the past seven decades. "Three-tier Panchayat Raj System has been established for the first time to take governance to the grassroots level. People are enjoying the peaceful atmosphere in J&K," he said. ●P-02

Gates open for Bollywood, Hollywood in J&K: LG

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Tuesday said that the UT reflects multi-cultural ethos of India and the administration led by him has revived film tourism under the film policy 2021 to open the gates of 'paradise' for Bollywood and Hollywood. Addressing the inaugural session of the Third G-20 Tourism Working Group meeting at SKICC on the banks of Dal Lake, the LG said the UT administration has rolled-out film policy in 2021 to open gates for Bollywood and Hollywood.

"In 2022, more than 300 films and serials were shot in J&K," the LG said. "We have included hundreds of new tourist destinations on the UT's tourist map. Many tourist destinations are already on the global map. In 2022, 18 million tourists visited J&K contributing 7 per cent to the total GDP of the UT." ●P-02



Hon'ble Prime Minister Modi Ji 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," the Lt Governor said.

UPSC 2022

Anantnag youth secures 7th rank, 16 J&K candidates qualify

Umairs Gull Ganie

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) Parsanjeet 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, a resident of Bragram village of Dooru-Shahbad in south Kashmir's Anantnag district said his hard work and dedication yielded results. ●P-02

G-20 event will help increase employment generation: Union Tourism Minister

Owais Gul

SRINAGAR: Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy Tuesday said G-20 event in Jammu & Kashmir will help to increase the employment avenues and also take the Union Territory's GDP from tourism to 15 per cent this year.

Talking to the reporters on the sidelines of the function here at SKICC, Reddy said that under India's presidency, 250 G-20 meetings are slated to be held in 56 capital cities of the states while Jammu & Kashmir's Srinagar—a picturesque place was one among them. He added that the additional



precautions were taken in Srinagar as after a long gap such an event is taking place here and different incidents occurred here, but the atmosphere is good. The Union Minister further

stated that like other parts of the country, the people in Jammu & Kashmir too want the development, employment generation like other parts, thereby under the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Union Territory is being taken on the path of progress and development.

About the G-20 meeting in Srinagar, he said that such an event would help in increasing the employment generation. "The tourism has contributed seven per cent of the GDP last year in J&K, and the event will help to take the GDP to 15 per cent this year and assist in increasing the employment generation," he said. ●P-02

AC approves absorption of 145 Centaur employees into JKTDC, JKCCC, SKICC

GMK News Network

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)

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



working at Centaur Lake view Hotel, Srinagar, in different corporations under the Tourism Department. Rajeev Rai Bhatnagar, Advisor to the Lieutenant Governor;

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 ●P-02

Mutual trust, respect bind India-Australia ties: PM Modi

IANIS

New Delhi: While addressing a massive crowd of the Indian diaspora in Sydney on Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that mutual trust and respect are the elements that bind India and Australia ties.

He made the remarks at an event at the Qudos Bank Arena where he received a rousing welcome from the diaspora members. Upon his arrival at the arena accompanied by his Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese, Modi was welcomed amid Vedic chanting and other traditional rituals.

Addressing the Indian diaspora, Modi said: "No matter what the geographical distances are between India and Australia, the Indian Ocean connects us. No matter how different lifestyles are in both countries, yoga connects us!

Cricket is something which has kept us connected for ages... and now tennis and movies form other connecting bridges. "There was a time when '3Cs'

Dosti (friendship). Now it has become '3Es' - Energy, Economy and Education.

"But the truth is that the actual depth of the relations



were used to define relations between India and Australia - Commonwealth, Cricket and Curry. After that, it was '3Ds' - Democracy, Diaspora and

between India and Australia transcends these C, D, E... The strongest and biggest foundations of this relation actually are mutual trust ●P-02

Delegates excited about event, agenda, place of meeting: Jitendra Singh

Raja Syed Rather

SRINAGAR: Union Minister Jitendra Singh on Tuesday said that Srinagar is a strange blend of traditional heritage and that the delegates from different G-20 countries were excited about the event, place and the agenda of the meeting.

Talking to the reporters here on the sidelines of the G-20 3rd Tourism Working Group Meeting, Jitendra said that all the delegates are absolutely excited about the event, about the place and about the agenda of the meeting.

He added that the promotion of tourism is one of the major hopes from the meeting.

Singh also said that the government of India is in the process of chalking out a national strategy document on film tour-

ism, which is one of the first of its kind initiative happening from the government sector to institutionalize the promotion



of film tourism. "I think there could have not been a better place than Srinagar, J&K to have launched that, which we did yesterday," he said. "Srinagar is a strange ●P-02

G-20 delegates moved by breathtaking artwork of Kashmiri artisans

Sajid Raina

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 this 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. ●P-02

.....from FRONT PAGE

New era in J&K opens

He said today, Jammu Kashmir stands among the developed regions of India on some measurable milestones, and the administration is committed for people's prosperity both economically and socially. "Hon'ble Prime Minister Modi Ji 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

sustainable tourism.

"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," the Lt Governor said. The Lt Governor said that after a long pause of almost 4-decades, J&K UT administration has revived the relationship with Bollywood and launched a film policy in 2021 to attract more investment into film sector. He also said that more than 300 movies

ing on four P's since the past four years that entails- "Peace, Progress, Prosperity and Peoples first." "We are opening up 300 new destinations to promote film tourism," he said.

To a query since administration hopes to see 20 million tourist arrivals in the ensuing year, whether J&K lacks the proper infrastructure including hotels to accommodate the guests, the LG said: "We are upgrading the tourist infrastructure at a great pace. In the next two years, world class hotels will come up. We are auctioning the land to see some five star

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.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant 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—(KNO)

Mutual trust, respect bind

and mutual respect, and the real reason behind this is Indian diaspora."

Modi said he has kept his promise that the Indians in Australia will not have to wait for another 28 years to see their Prime Minister.

"Last time when I came here, I gave you all a promise. And that promise was that you won't have to wait for India's Prime Minister for a long 28 years, again. And see, I am here! Prime Minister Albanese is also with me, here," he said.

Remembering the late Australian bowling great Shane Warne, said: "We are not only partners in happiness but also share our grief. The entire India grieved at the passing away of Shane Warne."

The Prime Minister also highlighted that how India in the last nine years has made great strides.

"We have opened around 500 million bank accounts for the poor people. Not only this, actually the whole eco-system of public delivery has been transformed in India. An amount worth over Rs 28 lakh crore have been directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries, since 2014.

"The JAM Trinity and DBT have brought a revolution in the country. IMF considers India the 'Bright Spot' of global economy. According to World Bank, if there's any country which is withstanding global headwinds, it is India. India has made record exports even in the most challenging times," he added.

As part of his final leg of the three-nation tour, Modi arrived in Sydney on Monday night as a guest of the Australian government.

In 2014, Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Australia after Rajiv Gandhi, where he addressed 20,000 people at the Sydney SuperDome at Olympic Park and said that in coming years, more Indian leaders will be visiting Down Under.

Delegates excited about

blend, we have a very rich traditional heritage personified over here, at the same time, we have some of the most monumental infrastructural success stories written over here, which include the highest railway bridge in the world, the longest bi-directional road tunnel," he said.

Moreover, during the event, Singh said, 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.

Dr. Singh hoped that the business community would help in scaling up the efforts already taken by the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of I&B.

Singh 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, Dr. Singh added—(KNO)

G-20 delegates moved

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 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.

Meanwhile, the Union minister of State for defence and tourism, Ajay Bhatt in a tweet said that he visited the exhibition stalls at SKICC, the G20 venue in Srinagar. "Impressed by the diverse range of displays showcasing the rich culture and craftsmanship of Kashmir. Such exhibitions provide a platform to promote local talent and create opportunities for economic growth," he said—(KNO)



are ensuring social equality and equal economic opportunity to all citizens, which is also enabling them to contribute to the nation building," the Lt Governor said.

Throwing light on the transformation of Jammu Kashmir, the Lt Governor 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. He said in the past 4 years, the ranking of Jammu Kashmir on the various parameters of sustainable development goals have gone up, thanks to visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Modi Ji.

"The world can see that 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," the Lt Governor said.

Acknowledging the impact of covid pandemic on the tourism and world, the Lt Governor said, Covid pandemic made the world realize the hard way the virtues of traveller'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," the Lt Governor remarked as he noted that Jammu and Kashmir is already working on a few of the priority areas identified by the G20 Tourism Working Group like on 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 Lt Governor said, Jammu Kashmir is more than a tourism destination.

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

The Lt Governor noted that a record number of 18 million tourists visited Jammu Kashmir And, the last year, the tourism sector made 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 the

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 Hon'ble 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 travellers," the Lt Governor observed.

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

Gates open for Bollywood

LG Sinha said that the J & K administration has not just explored the new tourist destinations but started home stays in various beautiful villages. "J&K youth are scripting a bright future. The UT reflects the cultural ethos of India," he said. "J&K is being developed as a digital society. In the last financial year, 92500 projects were completed. The region is witnessing a great transformation. He said the suggestions that have come to fore in the G-20 meetings that entail green tourism, eco-tourism and S&MEs have already been started by the J&K administration. The LG said that he was hopeful that the delegates enjoyed the serene and mesmerising beauty of the famous Dal Lake.

Speaking on the occasion MoS for Science and Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh said that Srinagar offers wide-range of handicrafts—the embroidery, paper mache, crewl and various other forms of art. "New industries are coming up and infrastructure is being developed rapidly. Luckily, we have the world's highest rail bridge over river Chenab in Jammu. We have the Lavender cultivation project in Bharderwah area of Jammu region where many entrepreneurs from the outside have evinced their interest to start their business," he said—(KNO)

Terror ecosystem in

The LG said that Kashmir is no more the land of hartals, school closures and separatist activities. "Business is flourishing with each passing day. Shops remain open every day as hartals have become a part of history. Children are attending schools and colleges every day. Youth are pursuing their careers in higher studies. Separatist activities have come to an end forever," he said. "As far as the terror ecosystem, the security grid has succeeded to destroy it to a large extent."

Expressing gratitude to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for choosing Srinagar for the meeting of Third Tourism Working group of G-20, the LG said that the event will help boost the tourism potential of J&K that includes eco-tourism, film tourism and green tourism. "I am hopeful that the representatives of foreign countries that are part of G-20 event in Srinagar will help lift the negative travel advisories imposed on J&K by some foreign countries. I am glad to see that the representatives of some foreign countries who have imposed travel advisory on J&K, are also participating in the Srinagar event," the LG said.

He said that the UT administration has been focus-

hotels in Srinagar and Jammu," he said.

On upgrading the transport system in Srinagar, he said from the month of August, E-buses will ply in Srinagar and Jammu. Replying to the query about high air-fares, the LG said that the administration is aware of the issue and will soon streamline the air-fare. "This has happened as Go-Air has stopped its operations in J&K," he said. Asked about Pakistan's objection to G-20 events in Srinagar, the LG said: "Pakistan should first address the issues of food and edibles back home." Chipping-in, the Chief Coordinator of the G-20 event, Harsh Vardhan Shringla said that Pakistan has no locus-standi to question or talk about G-20 in Srinagar. G-20 event has nothing to do with Pakistan.—(KNO)

AC approves absorption of

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.

G-20 event will help increase

Moreover, Reddy while addressing a side event on the theme "Promoting Incredible India through Film Tourism" on the sidelines of the 3rd Tourism Working Group Meeting, said, tourism has the greatest ability to generate overall employment especially among the vulnerable communities. "Film production can have a lasting 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 policies 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—(KNO)

Anantnag youth

"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 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 told KNO 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

'Riverbanks, wetland area in Sopore to be developed for recreation'

WARIS FAYAZ

Sopore: Authorities in Sopore are mulling to launch recreational activities alongside wetland and Jehlum banks in

last year after noticing the structures at Ningli site lie in shambles conditions. The area was demarcated and fenced, he said.

He said that as of now,



north Kashmir's Sopore. Incharge CEO Hygam-Ningli Tarzoo development authority, Ghulam Jeelani Zargar said Sopore falling alongside wetland area and riverbanks is going to be a starting point for the water adventures tourism.

"Water cruex will be started from the Ningli Sopore area which will move towards Watlab and Bandipora covering the entire Wular lake," Zargar said.

The measures to beautify the area was taken

HNTDA - the already constituted developmental authority is going to develop a washroom, landscape and parking facilities and works are expected to be completed by September.

Locals hailed the move saying, "The move is going to create not only awareness among people but will be helpful also in generating employment opportunities especially for the fishermen community," said Aijaz Ahmad Dar, Patron Central Auqaaf Tarzoo—(KNO)

Minor boy dies after falling in dam in Shopian village

AGENCIES

Srinagar: A 6-year-old boy died after he fell in a dam behind his school in Sedow area of south Kashmir's Shopian district on Tuesday. An official said that the boy, who is mentally unsound, fell into the dam during lunch time. He said that soon after the incident the boy rescued by locals and was taken to PHC Sedow where he was declared dead on arrival.

He has been identified as Farhan Muzaffar (06) son of Muzaffar Ahmad Lone of Sedow Heerpora.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident—(KNO)

Child rights group raids placement agency in Srinagar in missing MP boy's case

AGENCIES

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

A senior member of the Child Welfare Committee, Srinagar, Beenish said that acting upon a specific complaint received through a mail on Tuesday morning about the missing boy, they raided a placement agency in Srinagar's

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. Meanwhile, KNO tried to reach out to the placement agency for comments, but there was no reply to the repeated calls.

Mission Vatsalya scheme is a roadmap to achieve development and child protection priorities aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The scheme lays emphasis on child rights, advocacy, and awareness along with strengthening the juvenile justice care and protection system with the motto to 'leave no child behind'.

The scheme is implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme in partnership with State governments and UT administrations to support the States and UTs in universalising access and improving the quality of services across the country—(KNO)



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,

J&K poised to witness huge tourist footfall post G20 event: BJP

GMK NEWS NETWORK

Jammu: Former minister and Vice President Pradesh BJP, Surjeet Singh Slathia Tuesday said that Jammu and Kashmir is poised to witness a huge tourist footfall post G 20 event, adding

Jammu and Kashmir to peace and stability as the party is religiously working towards restoring dignity of the people and instilling a sense of confidence in them after dark phase of turbulence.

Referring to the most suc-

cessful visit of Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi to Japan in connection with the G7 meeting and his ongoing tour of several countries, Mr Slathia said the esteem he got from various heads of nations has made every Indian proud. His statesmanship and visionary leadership has put the nation on the path of becoming Vishwa Guru, he added.

Mr Slathia also referred to various initiatives taken for progress and development of Jammu and Kash-

mir in the recent years and said the people in both the regions are feeling the positives of the change in a big way. This is why they are determined to give the BJP a chance to proceed ahead with its mission of Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas,

Valley has become a nightmare of the past, paving way for unprecedented influx of tourists round the year, The holding of the G20 event reflects people's yearning for continued and lasting peace, he added.

Similarly, Mr Slathia



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Valley has become a nightmare of the past, paving way for unprecedented influx of tourists round the year, The holding of the G20 event reflects people's yearning for continued and lasting peace, he added.

Similarly, Mr Slathia

that the economic activity is destined to undergo unprecedented transformation.

Speaking at BJP's Mandal Karyakarni at Gurah Salathia in the Vijaypur assembly constituency this morning, Mr Slathia said the event has rekindled a big hope among all those associated with tourism and travel trade besides crafts and the day is not far when the Union Territory will become a shining chapter of India's envious growth story .

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Sagar Parasri, ex-NCERT employee transforms Disability into Inclusive Message

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In a transformative endeavour, 60-year-old Sagar Parasri, a former employee of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), has embarked on a remarkable journey to Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

His mission involves creating a profound impact on schools and students, promoting a society that embraces diversity and recognizes the inherent value of every individual, irrespective of their abilities.

Sagar toured several educational institutions, including the Shafaqat Rehabilitation Centre, Chhotey Taare, and Iqra High School, Bemina, where he engaged with students and emphasized the importance of embracing a peaceful existence.

On Monday, Sagar Parasri conducted an engaging session with the staff of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), led by Joint Director (Central) Fayaz Ahmad Fayaz.

Rubeena Salma, the head of the Inclusive and Special Education Wing, introduced Sagar, highlighting his remarkable contributions to peace-building and inclusive education.

During his address, Sagar spoke passionately about his journey, emphasizing that his physical disability did not dampen his willpower. He expressed his tireless commitment to motivate and encourage individuals facing similar



circumstances, urging them not to succumb to societal, psychological, or physical pressures. He reminded the audience of the preciousness of life and encouraged them to cherish the wonders of nature.

Encouraging societal transformation, Sagar called upon individuals to eschew negative thoughts, narrow-minded perspectives, and discriminatory behaviour towards children with special needs.

"By nurturing inclusivity, these children have the potential to blossom into self-assured individuals with a profound sense of self-worth," he said, adding "By upholding equal rights and opportunities for all, we not only empower disabled

ments of those considered 'normal,'" Fayaz said. "It is vital to recognize the remarkable accomplishments that can emerge when we appreciate the unique strengths and potential possessed by individuals with disabilities, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity."

During his illustrious career spanning three decades, Sagar has interacted with over 2.5 million students, sharing his experiences and spreading his message of inclusiveness. Sagar's ability to rise above his physical limitations has made him an inspirational figure. He has traversed the length and breadth of the country at his own expense, demonstrating that despite disabilities, one can achieve their aspirations. His unwavering determination has served as a beacon of hope for others facing similar challenges.

Expressing his gratitude, he thanked the School Education Department for their support during his visit, specifically mentioning the Commissioner Secretary, Alok Kumar, and the Special Secretary, Naseer Ahmad Wani.

Sagar also extended his appreciation to the SCERT for providing accommodation and other forms of support that contributed to the success of his visit.

Sagar also extended his appreciation to the SCERT for providing accommodation and other forms of support that contributed to the success of his visit.

Chairman DDC B'pora chairs Annual Action Plan 2023-24 meeting

GMK NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA: The Chairman District Development Council (DDC) Bandipora, Ab Gani Bhat, along with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Dr Owais Tuesday presided over the Annual Action Plan meeting 2023-24.

The meeting was attended by Vice Chairperson DDC Kowsar Shafeeq, DDC members, BDC members, PRIs, ADDC Bandipora and JD Planning, besides other district and sectoral officers.

The meeting discussed and chalked out an outline of the development priorities and strategies for the fiscal year 2023-24. It also assessed the progress made in the previous year and threadbare discussed a comprehensive

roadmap for the development of Bandipora for future. The meeting witnessed constructive discussion and collaborative efforts to identify and prioritize crucial projects and initiatives.

During the meeting, Chairman DDC emphasized the importance of inclusive and sustainable development that caters to the needs and aspirations of all sections of society. He reiterated the significance of transparency, accountability, and effective utilization of resources to ensure successful implementation of the Annual Action Plan.

On the occasion, various departments presented their proposed projects and initiatives for the current and upcoming fiscal year. The discussion focused on identifying key devel-

opment areas, addressing infrastructure gaps, improving public services, promoting tourism, enhancing educational facilities,



and boosting livelihood opportunities.

Dr Owais, on the occasion, directed the departments to ensure timely

Ganderbal man creates unique art using rock powder for painting

IANIS

Srinagar: Ganderbal district in central Kashmir is home to a remarkable artist whose creative talent has earned him global recognition.

Manzoor Ahmad Bhat transforms rock powder sourced from the mountains of Kashmir into breathtaking paintings that leave the viewers in awe. His unique artistic process showcases the harmonious fusion of nature's raw beauty and his own artistic brilliance.

The journey of Manzoor Ahmad Bhat began amid the towering peaks and serene valleys of Kashmir. Drawn to the mystique of the region's mountains, he began collecting rocks from various locations, fascinated by the diverse hues and textures they presented. As he immersed himself in this pursuit, an idea took root in his mind - to create art using the very essence of these mountains.

"When I hold a rock in my hand, I feel a deep connection with nature. I wanted to capture the essence of these mountains and showcase their beauty in a way that hasn't been done before," Bhat said.

Bhat's artistic process is a testament to his unwavering dedication and meticulous craftsmanship. At his home studio, he grinds the collected rocks using a mortar, carefully extracting vibrant pigments that retain the essence of their natural origins. The resulting rock powder serves as his medium, which he skillfully mixes with binders to create his works.

"The process of grinding rocks is both physically demanding and mentally stimulating. Each rock is unique, and it takes patience and precision to extract the desired colours. It's like revealing the hidden secrets of the mountains through art," Bhat said.

With a palette of colours derived from the mountains, Bhat's brushstrokes breathe life onto his board. His paintings depict breathtaking landscapes, traditional Kashmiri motifs, and poignant portraits, each stroke capturing the spirit of the region. The intricate details and vibrant tones evoke a sense of awe and

admiration. Through his exceptional talent, Bhat serves as a true inspiration, reminding us that the ordinary can become extraordinary with a touch of artistic brilliance and a deep connection with nature.

wonder, transporting viewers to the very heart of Kashmir's natural beauty.

Bhat's talent has garnered him international recognition, with his artworks displayed in prestigious galleries and art exhibitions worldwide. Collectors and art enthusiasts are captivated by the unique texture and depth that the rock powder brings to his paintings, creating an unmatched visual experience.

"I believe that by using materials sourced directly from the mountains, my art becomes a bridge between people and nature. It's a way to remind ourselves of the importance of preserving our environment and appreciating the beauty that surrounds us," Bhat said.

As Bhat continues on his artistic journey, he hopes to inspire a new generation of artists to explore unconventional mediums and develop a deeper connection with their surroundings. He conducts workshops and mentorship programmes to share his techniques and ignite the spark of creativity in others.

"I want to encourage artists to think outside the box and challenge the boundaries of traditional art. There is so much beauty and inspiration in the world, waiting to be discovered and interpreted through our unique perspectives," Bhat said.

Bhat's artistic prowess transcends conventional boundaries, unveiling a world where nature's essence converges with human creativity. Through his remarkable paintings, he invites us to pause, immerse ourselves in the splendour of the mountains, and appreciate the intricate wonders that lie within the rocks beneath our feet.

In the words of Bhat, "Art has the power to reveal the hidden stories of our world. By capturing the essence of the mountains, I hope to awaken a sense of wonder and appreciation for the beauty that surrounds us all."

Through his exceptional talent, Bhat serves as a true inspiration, reminding us that the ordinary can become extraordinary with a touch of artistic brilliance and a deep connection with nature.

Decade on, school building left abandoned in Anantnag's Hassanpora

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Anantnag: Despite elapsing a decade, the authorities have failed to complete the construction of a school building in Hassanpora area of Bijbehara, leaving the half-constructed structure abandoned.

Locals from Hassanpora area said that the authorities started construction of a school building around a decade before at Government Middle School Hassanpora.

Ali Mohammad, a local resident, said that the construction of the building started in the year 2013 and it was left mid-way.

He said that the base and brick work of the building has been completed but the rest of the works are being delayed for unknown reasons, adding that the under construction building is in dilapidated condition and can collapse any time.

Another local said that the building is being used for anti-social activities, appealing the government to take immediate steps to complete the building.

A teacher working at the school said that they are facing space crunch at the school as there are just seven rooms for nine classes, which include an office as well.

He said that the completion of the building will put an end to their sufferings.

Locals said that



despite bringing this issue into the notice of higher ups several times; nothing has been done in this regard.

They urged them to look into the matter and complete the building at an earliest so that students studying there won't suffer anymore.

Headmaster of the school said that they have brought the issue into the notice of higher ups and they are hopeful that very soon this building will be completed—(KNO)

Good Morning Kashmir

EDITORIAL

G20 SUMMIT SIGNIFIES CHANGE

The radiance of G-20 is spreading across the valley. Srinagar hosting the maiden international summit has rekindled the hopes for a better and secure future for Jammu and Kashmir UT. It is a proud moment for the people of the valley. The aim of this conference is to bring peace and prosperity in the long run. Dignitaries from different countries focused on promoting cinema tourism in famous tourist destinations which will contribute to economic growth. Film shoots in our valley will unveil the scenic beauty, real culture, and genuine hospitality of Kashmir. The world will learn about the Specialities of UT. Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha while addressing the meeting of the 3rd Tourism Working Group (TWG) of G20, Tuesday also 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. He said in the past 4 years, the ranking of Jammu Kashmir on the various parameters of sustainable development goals have gone up, thanks to visionary leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Modi Ji. After the G-20 summit trade will touch new heights. Art and handicrafts will be recognized all over the world which will boost the economy. The talented artisans will be appreciated at an international level. This will for sure increase the interest levels of tourists of people across the world. The summit will help in the creation of jobs related to the tourism sector. This will reduce poverty and improve the quality of life. The meeting will discuss important issues related to development in different regions. The delegates are dazzled by the spectacular scenic beauty of Jammu and Kashmir. They are really having a good time. Some guests were seen enjoying the Shikara ride and had a huge smile on their faces. The administration has been successful in inviting the delegates and making this meeting event happen elegantly.

OBESITY - A GROWING CONCERN

DR. ATUL N.C. PETERS



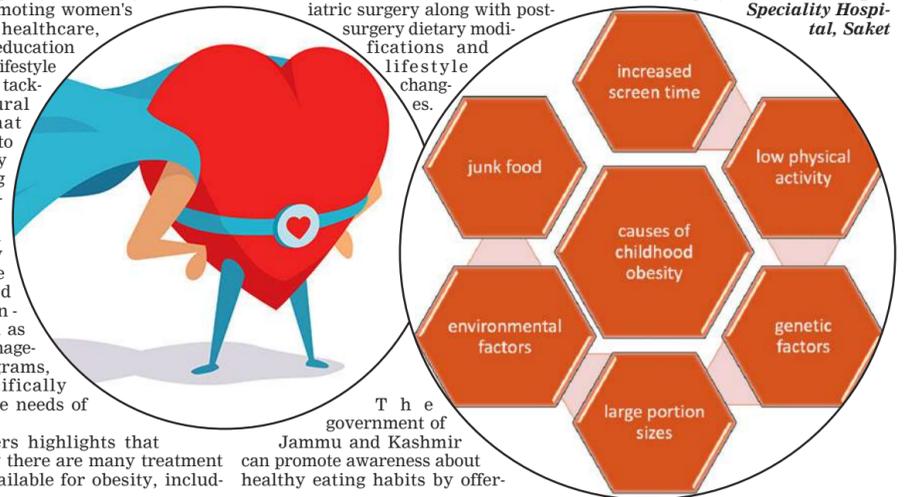
Obesity has become a growing concern in Jammu and Kashmir, just as it has globally. It is a condition where a person accumulates excessive body fat, leading to various health complications such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, sleep apnea, and more. There is limited data available on the male vs female ratio of obesity in Jammu and Kashmir. However, obesity is present in both genders, and it is a major public health issue in the region. Studies indicate that women are more likely to be obese than men globally. A large-scale study conducted in India found that the prevalence of obesity was significantly higher among women than men, with a prevalence rate of 15.7% among women and 9.1% among men. Prof. (Dr.) Atul N. C Peters says that in

Jammu and Kashmir, there are various factors that can contribute to the high prevalence of obesity among women, including a sedentary lifestyle, lack of physical activity, poor diet and nutrition habits, and cultural practices such as a preference for fatty and fried foods. He suggests that the government can take several measures to address the gender disparity in obesity, including promoting women's access to healthcare, providing education on healthy lifestyle habits, and tackling cultural norms that contribute to unhealthy eating habits. Furthermore, the medical community can provide targeted interventions, such as weight management programs, that specifically cater to the needs of women.

Dr. Peters highlights that fortunately there are many treatment options available for obesity, including dietary and lifestyle changes, FDA approved drugs, Intra Gastric Balloon and bariatric surgery. However, the treatment advice depends on an individual's BMI and associated comorbidities. Non-diabetic people below 32 BMI may benefit with conventional methods, drugs and/or intra gastric balloon. People above 32 BMI with associated comorbidities should be advised for bariatric surgery along with post-surgery dietary modifications and lifestyle changes.

The government of Jammu and Kashmir can promote awareness about healthy eating habits by offering appropriate nutrition education to school-aged children. Additionally, free gymnasiums or low-cost fitness centers can be set up at the community level to support local residents to lead an active lifestyle.

Dr. Atul N.C. Peters, Director - Bariatric, Minimal Access & General Surgery, Max Smart Super Speciality Hospital, Saket



SENTIENCE: DOES AI HAVE ARTIFICIAL CONSCIOUSNESS?

DAVID STEPHEN



There is a recent article, Why Conscious AI Is a Bad, Bad Idea, where the author stated that, "While some researchers suggest that conscious AI is close at hand, others, including me, believe it remains far away and might not be possible at all. But even if unlikely, it is unwise to dismiss the possibility altogether. The prospect of artificial consciousness raises ethical, safety, and

intelligence or AGIs (which is the kind that most pundits are afraid will eventually take over the world), machine learning is nowhere near the level that we can consider intelligent. And this breaks down to one simple fact: AGIs don't actually know anything."

The question that these articles, or others with similar drift, skip is: what does AI know? What do these large language models know? If they can respond to some queries or can carry out certain tasks accurately, those things, how can they be categorized?

Humans have external senses, but those are not ends. Often, it is see to know or see and know, applying to hear, touch, smell and taste. When something is sighted, its completion is what is known about it. If it is known, fine, if not, decision may vary.

During deep sleep, in a coma or under general anesthesia when it appears

no longer known.

In general, feelings and emotions are not categorized with knowing, but when things are felt they can be said to be felt and known, like cold, heat, pain and thirst. The same applies to anger, delight, interest and love. The emotion is known. Subjective experiences are also known, for example the position of a limb, the location of an itch and so forth.

Knowing is central with a key source, the mind. If knowing were the brain, death may not be possible. But the mind, overseeing knowing, packs and life goes. The cells and molecules of the brain structure, organize, build or construct the mind. The mind, however, has a different structure, function and components from the brain. Serotonin is the brain, mood is the mind.

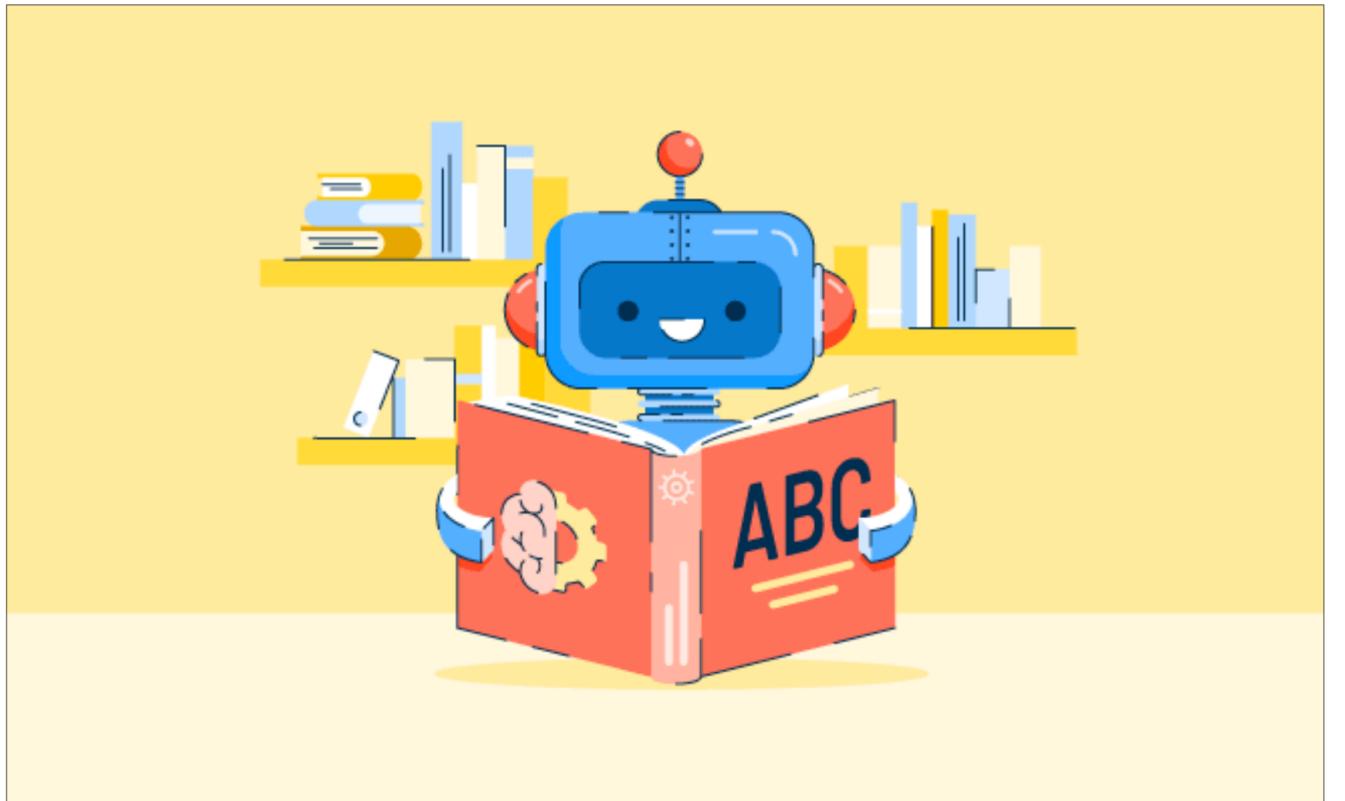
Organisms without a brain have a form-or mechanism-similar to the mind

ings, emotions, memory, and so forth. Memory includes creativity, reasoning, language, intelligence, skill and so on. All that humans know can be summed up to 1.

Plants and animals know, but their total is not 1. AI does not have feelings, emotions, sensations but it mirrors parts of the human memory. The total possible of what AI knows—or its memory, is higher than the share of memory for many plants and animals. This memory total is also possibly higher than the total knowing for some simple plants and animals.

LLMs may hallucinate, lack some logic, mix things up or not understand, but to the extent that they submit accuracies, they have a division of consciousness.

Consciousness can be defined as the ability for any system to know.



societal challenges significantly beyond those already posed by AI. Importantly, some of these challenges arise even when AI systems merely seem to be conscious, even if, under the hood, they are just algorithms whirring away in subjective oblivion."

There is another recent article, Artificial Intelligence—Still a long way away, where the author stated that, "Researchers love to expound on the complexity of their learning models and how even they don't understand what the models are actually doing and how it learns what it seems to do. And indeed, in some limited domains, such as learning how to play chess or go, machine learning can seem to learn how to do specific tasks much better than humans. But in the context of GENERAL artificial intelli-

that knowing is AWOL, the activities that allow knowing to go on—in the mind—are present, even though their degree does not get to awareness or attention. The parallel to this are internal senses, where they function properly without awareness, until something changes or gets known, directly or referred, like pain.

A key difference in the moments after death, from the last moments of life, is that the ability for the individual to know has closed. Hearing, pain, and others are

that helps them know. The organisms with a brain have a form of mind. The components of the mind, conceptually, are quantities and properties. Humans have more quantities and properties than others, or can know more than others—making humans dominant. Organisms can be said to be categorized by what they can know.

The list of what humans know includes perceptions, sensations, feel-

Humans are the standard with a value of 1. The mind gives knowing or consciousness. The sentience of AI, like humans, is predicated on knowing, to the limited maximum—in the memory category.(C-Counter Currents)

David Stephen does research in theoretical neuroscience. He was a visiting scholar in medical entomology at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, UIUC.

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Unveiling the Global Efforts

SUSTAINING LIFE ON EARTH



IRFAN ATTARI KASHMIRI

The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated annually on May 22nd to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity and its role in sustaining life on Earth. Biodiversity refers to the incredible variety of living organisms, including plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms, as well as the ecosystems they inhabit. This day serves as a reminder of the urgent need to conserve and protect the Earth's biodiversity, which is under threat from human activities such as habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change. In this article, we will explore the significance of biodiversity, the current challenges it faces, and the actions we can take to ensure its preservation.

UNDERSTANDING BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity encompasses the variety of life at all levels of biological organization, from genes to ecosystems. It is the result of billions of years of evolution, with different species adapting to various environments and forming intricate ecological relationships. Biodiversity provides numerous essential ecosystem services, such as pollination, nutrient cycling, soil formation, water purification, and climate regulation. These services are the foundation of human well-being, supporting agriculture, medicine, clean air and water, and overall environmental stability.

THE VALUE OF BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity holds immense value for both ecological and economic reasons. Ecologically, it ensures the resilience and stability of ecosystems, making them more capable of withstanding environmental changes and disturbances. The interconnectedness of species within ecosystems means that the loss of one species can have cascading effects throughout the entire system, leading to imbalances and potential collapse. Additionally, biodiversity contributes to the aesthetics of our planet, inspiring awe and wonder in the natural world. From an economic perspective, biodiversity is a vital asset. Many industries heavily rely on biodiversity, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and tourism. The genetic diversity found in different species provides a valuable resource for the development of new medicines, crop varieties, and technological innovations. Biodiversity-rich areas, such as coral reefs and rainforests, attract tourists and generate revenue, benefiting local economies.

CHALLENGES TO BIODIVERSITY

Unfortunately, human activities have significantly accelerated the loss of biodiversity, leading to a global crisis. The major challenges to biodiversity conservation include habitat destruction, pollution, invasive species, overexploitation of natural resources, and climate change. Habitat destruction, primarily driven by land conversion for agriculture, urbanization, and infrastructure development, is one of the most significant threats. The loss of natural habitats deprives countless species of their homes and disrupts ecological processes. Deforestation, in particular, has devastating consequences, as it destroys critical habitats like tropical rainforests, which harbor immense biodiversity. Pollution, both chemical



and plastic, poses severe risks to biodiversity. Chemical pollutants from industrial activities, agriculture, and improper waste disposal contaminate air, water, and soil, harming both terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. Plastic pollution, especially in marine environments, threatens marine life through entanglement and ingestion.

Invasive species, introduced by human activities outside their native range, can out-compete and displace native species, leading to population declines and ecosystem degradation. These invasions disrupt the delicate balance of ecosystems, altering species interactions and reducing biodiversity.

Overexploitation of natural resources, such as overfishing and illegal wildlife trade, further exacerbate the biodiversity crisis. Unsustainable practices can decimate populations of commercially valuable species, disrupt food chains, and negatively impact ecosystems. Climate change is a pressing threat to biodiversity. Rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and more frequent extreme weather events directly affect species' survival and alter their habitats. Climate change can lead to shifts in species distributions, loss of specialized habitats, and increased vulnerability to diseases.

CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY

Addressing the biodiversity crisis requires concerted efforts from individuals, communities, governments, and international organizations. Here are some key strategies for biodiversity conservation:

- ▶ **PROTECTED AREAS:** Establishing and effectively managing protected areas, such as national parks, reserves, and wildlife sanctuaries, are crucial for preserving biodiversity. These areas serve as safe havens for numerous species and allow for the restoration of ecosystems.
- ▶ **SUSTAINABLE LAND USE PRACTICES:** Promoting sustainable agriculture, forestry, and fisheries practices is essential for minimizing habitat destruction and reducing the pressure on natural resources. This includes agroforestry, organic farming, and sustainable harvesting techniques.
- ▶ **HABITAT RESTORATION:** Efforts should be made to restore degraded habitats and reconnect fragmented ecosystems. Restoration projects can involve reforestation, wetland rehabilitation, and the removal of invasive species to enhance ecosystem resilience.
- ▶ **COMBATING CLIMATE CHANGE:** Mitigating climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions is crucial for safeguarding biodiversity. Transitioning to renewable energy

sources, promoting energy efficiency, and adopting sustainable transportation systems are essential steps.

- ▶ **SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND TRADE:** Promoting sustainable consumption patterns and reducing the demand for products that harm biodiversity can significantly contribute to conservation efforts. Additionally, combating illegal wildlife trade is vital to protect endangered species.

- ▶ **EDUCATION AND AWARENESS:** Increasing public awareness about the value of biodiversity and its conservation is essential. Education can foster a sense of responsibility and encourage individuals to make sustainable choices in their daily lives.

- ▶ **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:** Strengthening international agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, and promoting collaboration between nations is crucial for achieving global biodiversity targets. Coordinated efforts are necessary to address transboundary challenges and share knowledge and resources.

STRUGGLES ON THE FRONTLINES

- ▶ **HABITAT DESTRUCTION AND FRAGMENTATION:** One of the greatest threats to biodiversity is habitat destruction and fragmentation. The relentless expansion of human activities, such as agriculture, urbanization, and infrastructure development, has resulted in the loss of vital ecosystems and disrupted critical ecological corridors. From the destruction of tropical rainforests to the degradation of coastal wetlands, the consequences are far-reaching. Countless species face displacement, population declines, and even extinction as their habitats vanish.

- ▶ **POLLUTION AND ITS ECOLOGICAL TOLL:** The pervasive presence of pollution in our ecosystems poses significant risks to biodiversity. Chemical pollutants from industrial discharge, agricultural runoff, and improper waste management

age-ment c o n - taminat e air, water bodies, and soil, compromising the health and well-being of numerous species. Similarly, the plastic pollution crisis continues to afflict marine ecosystems, with marine life suffocating on plastic debris or ingesting it

unknowingly. These pollutants disrupt the intricate web of life, compromising reproductive success, and undermining ecosystem functioning.

- ▶ **INVASIVE SPECIES AND THEIR IMPACTS:** Invasive species, introduced outside their native ranges either accidentally or intentionally, can wreak havoc on ecosystems. These interlopers often outcompete native species for resources, disrupt food chains, and alter ecosystem dynamics. Islands, in particular, are vulnerable to invasive species, with numerous endemic species facing the brink of extinction due to predation and competition from invasive counterparts.

- ▶ **OVEREXPLOITATION AND UNSUSTAINABLE PRACTICES:** The over-exploitation of natural resources, including overfishing, illegal wildlife trade, and unsustainable logging, presents a significant challenge to biodiversity conservation. Unsustainable practices lead to the depletion of populations, disrupt the delicate balance of ecosystems, and threaten the livelihoods of communities dependent on natural resources. Collaborative efforts between governments, local communities, and industry stakeholders are essential to implement sustainable management strategies, enforce regulations, and promote alternative livelihoods.

- ▶ **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS AMPLIFYING**

EFFECTS: Climate change poses a growing threat to biodiversity, exacerbating existing pressures and amplifying the risk of species extinction. Rising temperatures, altered precipitation patterns, and increased frequency of extreme weather events disrupt ecosystems, impacting species' distribution, reproductive cycles, and ecological interactions. Vulnerable habitats, such as coral reefs, mangroves, and polar ecosystems, face unprecedented challenges due to climate-related shifts, habitat loss, and increased susceptibility to diseases and invasive species.

SOLUTIONS IN MOTION

Despite the formidable challenges faced by biodiversity, there is hope on the horizon. Governments, organizations, scientists, and local communities are actively engaged in finding innovative solutions and implementing conservation strategies to protect and restore our planet's precious biodiversity. Here are some noteworthy initiatives:

- ▶ **Protected Areas and Conservation Reserves:** The establishment and effective management of protected areas play a pivotal role in biodiversity conservation. Governments and conservation organizations are expanding protected area networks, working towards ambitious targets to safeguard ecosystems and the species they support. Additionally, community-led conservation initiatives empower local communities to take an active role in preserving their natural heritage while benefiting from sustainable tourism and alternative livelihood opportunities.

- ▶ **Sustainable Land and Restoration Efforts:** Promoting sustainable

such as agroforestry, organic farming, and sustainable forestry aim to strike a balance between human needs and the preservation of biodiversity. Restoration projects, including reforestation, wetland rehabilitation, and the regeneration of degraded landscapes, offer hope for reversing the damage caused by human activities and enhancing the resilience of ecosystems.

- ▶ **Sustainable Consumption and Responsible Trade:** The promotion of sustainable consumption patterns and responsible trade practices can significantly impact biodiversity conservation. Consumer awareness campaigns, eco-certifications, and sustainable sourcing initiatives are fostering a shift towards products and services that are environmentally friendly and socially responsible. By supporting sustainable industries and reducing demand for products linked to biodiversity loss, individuals can contribute to positive change.

- ▶ **Technology and Innovation for Conservation:** Technological advancements are playing a pivotal role in biodiversity conservation. From satellite monitoring to DNA analysis, cutting-edge tools enable scientists and conservationists to better understand and address conservation challenges. Drones, artificial intelligence, and remote sensing techniques aid in monitoring and managing protected areas, identifying critical habitats, and assessing the health of ecosystems.

- ▶ **Collaboration and International Cooperation:** Addressing the global biodiversity crisis requires collaboration and cooperation at all levels. International agreements, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), provide a framework for nations to work together towards shared goals. Partnerships between governments, NGOs, indigenous communities, and private sector entities foster knowledge exchange, capacity building, and the pooling of resources for effective conservation action.

- ▶ **Conclusion: A Call to Action:** The International Day for Biological Diversity serves as a poignant reminder of our shared responsibility to protect the intricate web of life that sustains us all. In the face of escalating threats, we must rise to the occasion and take concrete actions to preserve biodiversity. It is imperative that governments strengthen legislation, enforce regulations, and integrate biodiversity considerations into decision-making processes. Civil society organizations and individuals can support local conservation initiatives, participate in citizen science projects, and champion sustainable practices in their communities. Education and awareness efforts should be intensified, highlighting the value of biodiversity and the urgency of its conservation.

The battle for biodiversity preservation is ongoing, but with concerted efforts and unwavering commitment, we can turn the tide and create a sustainable future where both nature and humanity thrive. On this International Day for Biological Diversity, let us unite in the pursuit of a world where every species has a fighting chance to exist and flourish, ensuring a resilient and vibrant planet for generations to come.

The Author is a Renowned Social Activist/ Writer, President of the Foundation For Youth Web & Student Of Cybersecurity. He can be mailed at askirfanattari@gmail.com



land use practices is critical to mitigating habitat destruction and land degradation. Initiatives

Baramulla villagers demand macadamization of link road

SAJAD PEER

BARAMULLA: The residents of Nai Basti - Dolipora, Kreeri area in north Kashmir's Baramulla district have appealed to the authorities to macadamize the link road.

The inhabitants told Good Morning Kashmir that during rains they are unable to commute on the stretch of roads that get inundated.

Locals said that the people in this area are facing many difficulties while stepping out during rains, adding that school-going children and worshippers are the worst sufferers.

"We want blacktopping of this 1-kilometer-long interior road along with a proper drainage system in the area," they said.

The locals said they have brought the issue to the notice of R&B authorities but to no avail. They have appealed to the Deputy Commissioner Baramulla to look into the matter.

"We appeal to authorities for macadamization of this road so that we don't have to suffer in winter," they said.



Traffic mayhem in Lal Bazar irks local population



ASHIQ NAIK

SRINAGAR: The free for all situation regarding traffic mayhem in Lal Bazar remains unresolved despite several reminders to the concerned authorities.

Even as the authorities are working 24 x 7 to change the look of Srinagar city in particular, the vast Lal Bazar locality seems to be

a neglected piece of land in the capital city.

"The street vendors have taken up about half of the road, causing a major traffic jam in the area. Even an ambulance if stuck in the traffic jam won't be able to move," Zahid Ahmad, a local resident said. Adding that a 5-minute drive now takes 20-25 minutes due to the huge mess.

"We went to all of the local officials, but they didn't seem to care about our issues. They should relocate these street sellers promptly so that we can move freely," another local resident said.

They appealed authorities to look into the matter at the earliest so that the residents could heave a sigh of relief.



B'la youth demand upgradation of playground

A lush green playground at Dolipora Kreeri village of Baramulla has always been a site of attraction for sports lovers, especially for the budding cricketers from district Baramulla. The tournaments organized throughout the year by local organizers even attract players from every district of Kashmir. Unfortunately, the said ground has not been appropriately developed. Now we, the youth of the area, request the Deputy Commissioner Baramulla to take necessary steps for its up-gradation.

Youth

Poor mobile service irks Baramulla villagers

SAIMA MUSHTAQ

BARAMULLA: Baramulla, July 26: The residents of Singhpora - Pattan area in north Kashmir's Baramulla district Tuesday accused private telecom operator 'Jio' of poor voice calls and mobile internet service.

The subscribers told Good Morning Kashmir that they were facing immense problems due to erratic calling and poor internet services in their area.

"We are preparing for exams. Poor internet connection in our area often wastes our time. Students have to wander here and there to search the mobile signal, sometimes we want to get rid of these poor services," said Tariq Ahmad, a local resident.

The residents said that they were unable to figure out why they had been deprived of this basic service.

"We several times approached the Jio authorities for upgrading signal

so that people may get relief but despite the passage of several years nothing has been done to redress our grievances," locals said.

The residents said that they cannot make calls due to lack of mobile connectivity in their area. "I am a businessman. My work is completely dependent on Internet services. I am unable to make online payments due to poor internet service. I am suffering losses for a very long time," said Sahil Nazir, a local resident.

"There are towers in our area but are of no use to us. We only have to spend money on recharges but when it comes to providing better services we are deprived of mobile services," they said.

The residents sought the immediate intervention of Deputy Commissioner Baramulla Sehrish Asgar and other concerned officials so that their grievances are redressed at the earliest.



NO SIGNAL

Jio subscribers in Ganderbal villages complain poor network

RAJA SYED RATHER

GANDERBAL: The subscribers of a private telecom company Jio in the Wakura area of central Kashmir's Ganderbal district have complained about the erratic calling and internet services.

The Jio subscribers in Wakura and its adjoining areas said that they are facing immense problems due to poor calling and internet services.

"We are unable to make calls as every time we dial the number, the network is either busy or switched off," the aggrieved people said. "Sometimes, it says the number does not exist or shows a number not registered on the network."

If at all, the call gets connected, the audio quality is so poor that we are left with no option but to disconnect the call, Bashir Ahmad, a local, said.

"This often comes on the Jio network," they as per news agency KNO said, adding that due to poor network, call drops happen frequently.

We informed the networking officials of the company about the erratic service many times but no step was taken to address the problem, the subscribers said.



The locals said that poor connectivity of the Jio network in the area has taken a toll on students who are dependent on online learning. They urged the company to address the issue on priority.

Repair the link roads in Maisuma

We, the residents of Maisuma are facing inconvenience due to poor condition of the inner link roads. These inner link roads are totally damaged. There are large potholes which make walking on this road nearly impossible. It is our humble request to the concerned authorities to repair this road as soon as possible.

Residents



Nihalpora residents demand macadamisation

We, the residents of Chan Mohalla, Nihalpora, Pattan have been waiting for the past many decades for macadamisation of road. We had raised the issue a number of times but no action has been taken yet. We once again appeal to the concerned authorities to look into the matter and resolve our grievance at the earliest.

Residents

Shift dumping site from HSHS



We, the residents of HSHS, Srinagar, are facing a lot of inconvenience due to a dumping site on the main road. There is a need for a big dustbin that could cater to such a large population. We request the concerned department to look into the matter and resolve our grievance at the earliest.

Residents

Choked drain irks Behrampora residents

We, the residents of Behrampora, want to bring to the notice of the authorities that choked drain from Wani Mohalla to Ganie Mohalla is creating a lot of inconvenience to the commuters. We appeal to the authorities to look into the matter and resolve our grievance at the earliest.

Residents

Bohri Kadal road in a shambles, locals demand macadamisation



KIRMANI AAFaq

SRINAGAR: The dilapidated condition of road from Bohri Kadal to Nowhatta here in Srinagar district is giving a tough time to the commuters.

Locals complained the road from Bohri Kadal to Nowhatta is in shambles. "The road in our area is dotted with potholes which speaks volumes about the tall claims of the government of improving road connectivity," the locals said.

The resident of the area told Good Morning Kashmir that it has been years since the road was blacktopped. A brief shower and the dozens of potholes turn into pools of water.

Adil Reham, a local resident of the area said we avoid sending kids to schools in wet conditions because they are the worst sufferers. "This road is full of potholes and traveling has become very difficult. These roads are very dangerous and many cause fatal accidents. We have requested the authorities time and again and also submitted our pleas to authorities but our pleas fell on deaf ears," Adil said.

Aghast over the callous approach of authorities, another local resident, Moumin Bashir said that the district administration has failed to macadamize the roads and authorities' "failure" leads them to suffer on daily basis.

"We request the concerned department to look into the matter and start macadamization of the road as soon as possible," he added. Another resident said that driving two-wheelers or four-wheelers on the existing road was fraught with dangers for both the motorist and pedestrians.

The residents appealed the administration to come to their rescue by addressing their problem and providing them better road connectivity in the area at the earliest.

According to them, they have been requesting the concerned authorities for so long but all in vain. Appealing the district administration and Lt Governor Manoj Sinha, residents requested the Lt Governor to look into the "serious" issue.

Unemployment rate in China soaring: 1 in 5 Chinese graduates are jobless

BEIJING: The unemployment rate among China's youth is soaring, while millions more are about to graduate. According to the Chinese Ministry of Education, 11.6 million college students are expected to graduate in June, an increase of 820,000 over 2022, reported The Straits Times.

The government reported last week that 20.4 per cent of people aged 16 to 24 looking for a job were out of work in April.

Notably, nearly 12 million Chinese expected to enter the job pool in June at a difficult time. One in five Chinese graduates are jobless, the highest level since China started announcing such statistics in 2018, reported The Straits Times.

Shu Xiang, 21, started looking for a job in February and still has had no luck. A financial-management major at a college in Chengdu, Shu said she had received five responses to about 100 applications. Graduation is in a few weeks.

"I'm not so confident about finding a job," she said.

High youth unemployment has been a dark stain on China's economy for several years, exacerbated by strict Covid-19 pandemic health restrictions that limited travel, decimated small businesses and damaged consumer confidence.



Even after announcing in December that it would start easing the policies of zero-Covid rules, the youth jobless rate has remained high, as the overall rate has ticked down two months in a row, reported The Straits Times.

Overall, the Chinese economy is steadying itself more slowly and unevenly than many believed it would.

Analysts said one problem is a mismatch between the jobs college graduates want and the available jobs.

In March, listings for jobs in tourism and in passenger and cargo transportation grew the fastest, according to Zhilian, a Chinese job search site.

Another sector with many available jobs in retail.

Industries such as construction, transportation and warehousing, which typically draw heavy interest from China's vast population of migrant workers, have also picked up, reported The Straits Times.

Dr Nie Riming, a researcher at the Shanghai Institute of Finance and Law, a research organisation, said young people with degrees in higher education were seeking jobs in technology, education and medicine.

"But these industries are exactly the ones that have been growing slowly in China in the past several years," Dr Nie said. "Many

industries not only did not grow but also suffered devastating blows."

Moreover, China has cracked down on its once-vibrant education and tech industries in the past several years.

Hundreds of thousands of people have lost their jobs. The tightened supervision has prompted concerns about further government intervention in the private sector, which in turn has led companies to reduce hiring, reported The Straits Times.

While the industries that attract educated young people are shrinking, the number of college graduates has been increasing. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

Closure of Nepal-China border crossings affected businessmen: Report

KATHMANDU: For the past eight years, all border crossings between Nepal and China have remained largely closed. This undeclared "blockade" by Beijing has left importers and businessmen in Nepal desperate, EPardafas reported.

The markets near the Chinese border became deserted, resulting in disappointment among the business community. Three years back, Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to Nepal expressed his willingness to prioritize the development of a comprehensive communication network between the two nations, as per the EPardafas report.

Xi's statement gathered enthusiasm among Nepali businessmen, who expressed hope for improved trade and economic opportunities. However, the closure of all border crossings of Nepal with China after the earthquake caused a crisis for not only significant businessmen but also small shopkeepers near the border.

Nepal shares a 1,414 km border with China, which comprises six checkpoints - Rasuwagadhi in Rasuwa, Tatopani in Sindhupalchok, Hilsa in Humla, Korla in Mustang, Kimathanka in Sankhuwasabha, and Olangchungola in Taplejung, as per the EPardafas report. However, only Rasuwagadhi and Tatopani checkpoints are partially operational, according to the news report.

Tatopani, which used to be a bustling market,



has remained quiet for eight years. Hom Bahadur Basnet, the President of the Sindhupalchowk Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that the border was closed and traffic was stopped by China after the earthquake.

Before the earthquake, the checkpoint was operational and domestic tourists used to come for hot baths, sightseeing, and buying inexpensive goods at the border market. However, all activities have come to a halt. Some professionals have left the region, while others have migrated to Kathmandu. Tatopani is considered as a crucial transit point connecting cities in China.

Hom Bahadur Basnet said that around 2000 truck drivers, co-drivers, and thousands of businessmen in Tatopani have lost their jobs due to the non-operation of the checkpoint. The business community has repeatedly requested the Chinese government to fully operationalize the border crossing in both directions by submitting memorandums.

Even though it was

declared that the checkpoint would operate smoothly from May 1. However, the situation remains unchanged. The situation at Rasuwagadhi mirrors that of Tatopani, EPardafas reported.

Rasuwa Industry and Commerce Association President Kesang Nirpu Tamang said that disruptions at the checkpoint have adversely affected the market and businesses in Rasuwagadhi, EPardafas reported.

Tiptala in Taplejung is an important crossing point that affects the daily lives of local residents. Despite the lack of a road connection, locals used to transport goods from Chauri to China and import essentials like salt, rice, pulses, oil, and clothes. However, locals have been forced to buy at inflated prices due to the border closure caused by COVID-19.

Humla's Hilsa has recently resumed operations after a closure due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Namgyal Lama, the president of the Humla Industry and Commerce Association, stressed that the closure of

the crossing had far-reaching consequences, affecting the local community and businesses.

The North Tatopani border crossing was initially reported to have been fully reopened on May 1. However, the reality is that the border crossing has only been partially opened for exports. Dayadand KC, an officer at the Tatopani Customs Office, said that exports have almost come to a standstill, and imports are sporadic as well, as per the news report.

Earlier, the People of Nepal had a reliable source of income through the export of food grains, vegetables, and even medicinal herbs like Satuwa to Khasa. However, currently, Nepali traders can only bring things like apples, garlic, and clothes to the Miteri bridge from Khasa, with a daily capacity of 6-7 containers.

In the current financial year, the Tatopani Customs Office had set a target to collect revenue amounting to 4 billion 62 million Nepali rupees. However, as of now, they have been able to collect only 2 billion 20 million Nepali rupees, according to the news report.

Businessmen have reported that in the past, China's imposition of the blockade caused the loss of millions of rupees. The Nepal Himalayan Cross Border Commerce Association has said that the goods bought from China are currently stuck in the border region, resulting in substantial financial losses for businessmen. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

Only 16 pc of people in Pakistan believe local economy is getting better: Report

ISLAMABAD: Only 16 per cent of people in Pakistan believe that their local economy is getting better, which is the lowest in the region except for Afghanistan, Dawn reported citing a Gallup survey report released this week.

The survey by Gallup World Poll showcases how the unrest in Pakistan is rooted in its economic woes. The survey stated that the perceptions of corruption in Pakistan have reached a record high, living standards have plummeted and left millions of people struggling to meet their basic needs.

The survey revealed that the economic downturn is being felt hardest in Sindh. The authors Hashim Pasha and Benedict Vigers in the report said, "Except for Afghanistan, where the economy has crumbled since the Taliban's takeover, Pakistan ranks

lower than all other countries in the Asia-Pacific region in perceptions of improving economic conditions."

86 percent of Pakistanis consider corruption to be widespread in Pakistan's government and 80 per cent believe that corruption in businesses has hit record highs, Dawn reported.

Showcasing the connection between the recent political turmoil and economic crisis, the authors said that Pakistan's economy has seen record inflation, rising commodity prices, and significant declines in foreign investment and remittances, as per the Dawn report.

Catastrophic floods in 2022, partly overlapping the timing of Gallup's fieldwork in Pakistan also caused an estimated USD 15 billion in economic losses. The report said that former Paki-



stan PM Imran Khan's arrest Imran Khan and the "subsequent civil unrest have added

to the economic misery" as the value of Pakistani rupees (PKR) against the dollar dropped to a historic low.

The report said, "Recent mass protests coupled with an ongoing constitutional crisis have compounded the already chronic sense of instability in the South Asian nation and have made its efforts to avoid a sovereign default more precarious," according to Dawn report.

The authors said that at the beginning of Imran Khan's tenure as Pakistan's PM in 2018, Pakistani were far more likely to think their living standards were getting better than getting worse. The outlook of people in Pakistan has worsened ever since, according to the report.

In 2022, 19 percent of Pakistanis said their living standards were improving and 48 per cent said they were getting

worse. According to the survey, Pakistani women are more likely to be affected by the economic slump than men, Dawn reported.

The number of people in Pakistan who struggled to afford shelter increased in 2022 to 32 per cent, which is one of its highest points on record, as per the Dawn report. Speaking about the ongoing political situation in Pakistan, the report said that "the country is on the brink of default, and its future is deeply uncertain."

According to the report, the quality of life in Pakistan is unlikely to improve "as long as a sustainable political solution remains elusive," Dawn reported. It warned that until it happens, the people of Pakistan will continue to believe that they live in a corrupt system. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

Sikh women in Pakistan continue to face marginalisation, violence

CHANDIGARH: While women in India have made great progress since their participation, their counterparts in Pakistan continue to experience persecution, marginalisation, and violence, writes author Vaishali Sharma in Khalsa Vox.

Women's rights are guaranteed in the Indian Constitution, including education, health, and work.

Significant efforts have been made to improve the presence of women in politics, business, and public life, resulting in a more inclusive and progressive atmosphere. As a result, many Sikh women in India have achieved success in a variety of disciplines, breaking down social, political, and economic obstacles.

However, the situation of Sikh women in Pakistan continues to deteriorate. Sikh women have been persecuted and marginalised for a long time, especially since the development of extremism in the country. Furthermore, women in Pakistan are denied essential human rights, education, and access to health care because the state prioritises women's health, Khalsa Vox reported.

Women face systemic discrimination, abuse, and oppression in the country, which has a poor record on gender equality.

Furthermore, Pakistani society's patriarchal nature continues to impede women's autonomy, limiting their access to education, healthcare, and decision-making. Furthermore, forced marriages and honour killings are still widespread, with families pressuring women to marry within the com-



munity, Vaishali Sharma writes.

According to Khalsa Vox, in 2019, Jagjit Kaur, a young Sikh girl, was kidnapped and forcibly converted to Islam in Pakistan. Despite considerable protests, the Pakistani authorities did not restore Jagjit Kaur to her family and instead attempted to legitimise her illegal marriage to a Muslim man.

A 17-year-old Sikh girl was abducted, forced to convert to Islam, and married a 30-year-old Muslim man in a similar instance recorded in 2020. Despite widespread protests and international criticism, Pakistani authorities failed to prosecute the criminals.

These examples underscore the deplorable plight of Sikh women in Pakistan, where the government has failed to give the security and support they require to ensure their safety and dignity.

It is critical to reflect on the experiences of Sikh women and the challenges they face even today. While India has made significant strides in empowering women, especially Sikh women, Pakistan is still on an active mission to marginalize them further, the author writes. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

Impact of China's Belt and Road initiative on African countries

BEIJING: Despite China asserting time and again that Africa has benefited from Beijing's infrastructure projects under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the adverse impacts of them are seen on the country's environment as well as the economy, Capital News, a Kenya-based media company reported.

While these projects, bring development to these developing nations of Africa, little is known of the conditions set out in the loans signed in the financing agreements, putting pressure on the economy of these less-developed nations.

Whereas, infrastructural developments end up affecting the environment and ecosystems. These significant investments made by Beijing are a way in which China has quickly established a critical footprint throughout the country.

More often than not, according to China, African countries have benefited greatly from infrastructure projects funded by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). At the start of 2021, 140 countries had signed over 200 BRI cooperation agreements, which served as frameworks for Chinese enterprises to build infrastructure projects such as ports, railways, power plants, and telecommunication net-

works with low-interest Chinese loans to host countries, Capital News reported.

According to the Kenya-based media company, Capital News, a significant Chinese-led



infrastructure project that will eventually be developed along the Western African coast in order to facilitate tourist access to the treasures of the Red Sea and Atlantic Ocean was recently completed, connecting the capital city of Djibouti to Addis Ababa via rail.

Beijing is claimed to be responsible for about 70 per cent of Djibouti's total domestic product in debt, as well as the largest port in Africa, a railway to Ethiopia, and the nation's first overseas naval facility.

China now has substantial infrastructure assets in the BRI project, and there is little doubt that the government is contemplating a variety of choices, but it also enters into foreign cooperation agreements for its own gain.

The future of Lac Assal, Africa's lowest point (155 metres below sea level) will undoubtedly involve commerce, whether through greater tourism or salt mining.

Along with the new industrial complex, there are plans to build a visitor centre and wellness resorts similar to those found on the Dead Sea shoreline in Israel and Jordan, which may impact the environment and ecosystems. There have also been reports that the exploitation of the salt from the lake was uncontrolled, Kenya-based Capital News reported.

Without a doubt, human activities such as urbanization, industrialization, population expansion, deforestation, etc. are the leading causes of environmental degradation.

Several projects led by China in underdeveloped nations have received widespread condemnation from local communities in Africa as they have accused the country of using its BRI project to destroy ecological ecosystems in their desire of extracting oil, coal, metals, and timber.

The demand to put the Chinese projects to a halt which was deteriorating the fragile regions of the continent is also raised by the communities. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

Dutch politician leads fact-finding mission to Bangladesh to investigate genocide committed by Pak army

LONDON: Dutch politician and former Member of Parliament Harry van Bommel, along with a European delegation is on a visit to Bangladesh from May 20-26, where the delegation will investigate the genocide committed by Pakistan in 1971.

The mission is an initiative of the European Bangladesh Forum (EBF) and will also consist of genocide scientist Anthonie Holslag (VU), political analyst Chris Blackburn, British EBF chairman Ansar Ahmed Ullah and Dutch EBF chairman Bikash Chowdhury Barua.

The mission's goal is to obtain firsthand information on the genocide committed by the Pakistani army in Bangladesh during the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. The delegation tends to meet victims, witnesses, genocide researchers, academics, policymakers and government representatives in Bangladesh. In addition, the team visits a number of killing fields and war museums in and around the capital Dhaka and the second major city Chittagong, according to an

official statement. The mission to Bangladesh takes place at a time when there is worldwide attention for the genocide in Bangladesh.

Recently, two members of the US Congress submitted a resolution to the US House of Representatives calling on the President of the United States, Joe Biden, to recognize the crimes against humanity committed by the Pakistani military at the time.

In the United Kingdom, too, recognition of the 1971 genocide has been discussed in parliament. According to delegation leader Van Bommel, "Dutch recognition of this genocide is relevant because in 1972 the Netherlands was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Bangladesh."

According to the official statement, the fact-finding mission will communicate its findings to the Dutch government and the House of Representatives. The European Bangladesh Forum will also organise a conference on the findings. (MILAP NEWS NETWORK)

'PROMOTING INCREDIBLE INDIA THROUGH FILM TOURISM'

Film production can have a last impact on travel destinations: G. Kishan Reddy

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh, and Union Minister of Culture, Tourism and the Development of the North Eastern Region, Shri 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, Sh. 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, Dr. Jitendra Singh said, 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, Dr. Singh added.

Dr. Singh hoped that



the business community will help in scaling up the efforts already taken by the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of I&B.

Dr. Jitendra Singh 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, Dr. Singh added.

During the event, Sh. G. Kishan Reddy said, tourism has the greatest ability to generate overall employment especially among the vulnerable communities. Film production can have a last impact on travel des-

tinations as the cinematic exposure to a destination transforms the place into a tourist destination, Sh. Reddy added.

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

Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Shri 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 shoot the best films here, Sh. 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.

Sh. 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.

MeT predicts widespread rains in plains, snowfall on higher reaches

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/Thunderstorm 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 possibility of moderate to heavy snowfall possible over higher reaches," he said.

From May 27-29, he said, there is 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 nullahs (rivulets, especially low laying ones",



water Logging in low laying 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, Sinthan 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 above normal for the summer capital.

Qazigund, he said, recorded a low of 10.8°C against 9.0°C on the previous night and it was above

normal by 0.5°C for the gateway town of Kashmir.

Pahalgam, he said, recorded a low of 10.2°C against 6.2°C on the previous night and it was 4.0°C above normal for the famous tourist resort in south Kashmir's Anantnag district.

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 Baderwah 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)

In JK, 1.5 percent students have been identified as CwSN

BHAT IMRAN

SRINAGAR: In Jammu and Kashmir, at least 1.5 percent students either enrolled or out of schools have been identified as Children with Special Needs (CwSN).

The officials said that among the total of CwSN, School Education Department have enrolled 19,867 CwSN from Pre-Primary to Higher Secondary levels.

Director of School Education Kashmir (DSEK) said this in a communique to Chief Executive Education Officers (CEOs) of the region. The director has called for the screening, identification and mainstreaming of Children with Special Needs (CWSN).

DSEK said that National Education Policy (NEP)

2020 is in complete consonance with the provisions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016 and is compliant with all its recommendations with regard to school education considering inclusive education as a system of education wherein students with and without disabilities learn together and the system of teaching and learning is suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of different types of students with disabilities.

"It also envisages barrier-free access to education for all the children with disabilities," reads the communique.

It also reads, "In this regard, the National Sample Survey (NSS) as per definition of 21 disabilities has

identified 1.5 percent of students as CwSN in JK, out of which 19,867 CwSN are enrolled from Pre-Primary to Higher Secondary."

DSEK further said that it has also observed that there is a significant drop out of children with special needs from class VIII onwards as per UDISE+ data.

"As such it is requested to CEOs to intensify the measures for annual exercise for early screening and identification of children with disabilities through Prashast mobile app be it physical, intellectual or learning disabilities, so that they may be given the right kind of interventions at a very early age to help them overcome academic difficulties that they may face at higher levels of education," DSEK said—(KNO)

Minor boy dies after falling in dam in Shopian village

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: A 6-year-old boy died after he fell in a dam behind his school in Sedow area of south Kashmir's Shopian district on Tuesday.

An official said that the boy, who is mentally unsound, fell into the dam during lunch time.

He said that soon after the incident the boy rescued by locals and was taken to PHC Sedow where he was declared dead on arrival.

He has been identified as Farhan Muzaffar (06) son of Muzaffar Ahmad Lone of Sedow Heerpora.

Meanwhile, police have taken cognizance of the incident—(KNO)

Korea, India need to promote cultural exchanges to increase tourist footfall: Korean Ambassador

Says Korea extends complete support to India for its G20 presidency

RAJA SYED RATHER

SRINAGAR: Korean Ambassador Chang Jaebok Tuesday said that Korea and India need to put efforts to increase tourist footfall from Korea to Kashmir.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of the 3rd G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting, Korean Ambassa-

dor said that both governments need to promote cultural exchanges to attract film crews for shooting in the Valley.

Jaebok also said that the Korean government extends complete support to India for its G20 presidency this year. "Every country has its own position on any issue, but as far as Korea is concerned,

we are completely supporting India for its G20 presidency this year," he said.

He said that it will take some time to have increased footfall of tourists from Korea to Kashmir, but the governments of both India and Korea need to promote cultural exchange in this regard—(KNO)

Ladakh Scouts Regimental Centre organizes bike expedition

GMK NEWS NETWORK

LEH: To commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Ladakh Scouts on 01 Jun 2023 and to pay tributes to the valiant soldiers for their unparalleled contribution towards the Nation, Zedang Sumpa Battalion of the Ladakh Scouts Regiment in collaboration with Royal Enfield has undertaken a bike expedition from National War Memorial, Delhi to Leh War Memorial from 23 May 2023 to 01 Jun 2023.

The expedition was flagged off at Delhi by Lieutenant General AK Samantara, Director Gen-



eral Infantry. Defence spokesman said in a statement issued.

The statement said that the riders will cover a total distance of 1038 kilometers and will cross over high himalayan passes of Rohtang, Bara Lachla and Palchan.

They will also interact with the citizens enroute with an aim to apprise them of the gallant stories of brave Nunnus,

who have stood steadfast during adverse conditions and have ensured the sanctity of borders. The team will also visit schools enroute and spread awareness about various career options in the Indian Army.

The bike expedition 'Vanquish' will endeavor to replicate the invisible spirit of our bravehearts by rekindling their spirit of courage and adventure, the statement added.

Two drug peddlers arrested in Kulgam: Police

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested two drug peddlers in Kulgam and recovered contraband, psychotropic substances from their possession.

A police party of Police Station Kulgam led by SHO PS Kulgam during patrolling intercepted a suspicious person who on noticing police party tried to flee from the spot but was apprehended tactfully by alert police party, a police

spokesman said in a statement issued.

During search, officers were able to recover 1.7 grams of Charas like contraband substance from his possession. He has been identified as Mohd Yousuf Khanday son of Abdul Ahad Khanday resident of Danew Bogund, police said.

In another action, a police party headed by Incharge Police Post Frisal at a checkpoint established at Peerbal intercepted a vehicle bearing registration number JK02AU-0653 driven by Kamran

Gull Bhat son of Ghulam Mohammad Bhat resident of Hardu Akad Mattan, Anantnag, police said.

During checking, officers were able to recover 11Kgs of Poppy Straw and 12 bottles of codeine phosphate-like contraband substances from his possession, police said.

"Both the accused persons have been arrested and shifted to respective police stations where they remain in custody. Vehicle used in commission of crime was also seized," police said.



INOX
LIVE THE MOVIE
SRINAGAR

INOX CINEMA
SHIVPORA SRINAGAR



MOVIES NOW SHOWING

FAST X



11:30AM (3D Hindi Atmos)
2:40PM, 6:00PM
(3D Eng Atmos with Subtitles)
12:30PM, 3:40PM, 6:45PM (English)
U/A

KISI KA BHAII KISI KI JAAN



12:00PM (Hindi)
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GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY VOL 3



4:00PM (English)
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