

Gulmarg experiences unprecedented surge in tourist arrivals

Suhail Bhat

SRINAGAR, May 17: Gulmarg, the premier tourist destination in Kashmir, has experienced an unprecedented surge in tourist arrivals over the past five months, with officials attributing it to robust tourism campaigns, bolstered security measures, and substantial improvements in infrastructure.

According to the official, the rise in tourists not only boosts the local economy but also demonstrates how successfully the

by 26,149 locals, bringing the total to 95,989. As February rolled in, the charm of Gulmarg attracted even more tourists, with domestic figures reaching 73,690, locals at 10,421, and foreigners at 1,094.

March witnessed an increase

hospitality to the world. The Gondola ride, one of the primary attractions of Gulmarg, has seen an astounding rise in popularity, drawing up to 400,000 tourists since the start of this year. The government has added additional time slots to suit



Principal District and Sessions Judge Kargil, Iqbal Ahmad Masoudi chairing district coordination meeting.

Coordination meeting held to assess judicial infrastructure in Kargil distt

Excelsior Correspondent

KARGIL, May 17: A district coordination meeting was held under the chairmanship of Iqbal Ahmad Masoudi (Principal District and Sessions Judge Kargil) at Conference Hall, Baroo, here today to assess the judicial infrastructure across the district.

The meeting held on the direction of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh on the subject "Scheme for Coordination Meeting at District Level", was coordinated by Phuntsog Angmo, Chief Judicial Magistrate Kargil (Secretary, Coordination Meeting).

Deputy Commissioner/CEO LAHDC Kargil, Santosh Sukhadeve; Munsiff/MIC Sankoo, Shafiq Mushtaq Lone; Munsiff Additional/Special Mobile Magistrate Drass, Imran Hanif Khan; SSP Kargil, Anayat Ali Chowdhary; SE PWD (R&B) Kargil, Abdul Mutalib; District Social Welfare Officer, Aga Syed Jamal; I/C CMO Kargil, Dr Jalil; Executive Engineer PHE Kargil, Mohd Hassan Lone; Executive Engineer R&B II Kargil, Sadiq Ali; Executive Officer MC Kargil, Murtaza; APP Kargil, Tsering Phuntsog; APP SMM

(13FC) Kargil, Ghulam Murtaza (Advocate); Chairperson CWC Kargil, Shahnavaz Ali and Member JJB Kargil, Hamida Banoo attended the meeting.

In the meeting, various issues pertaining to judicial infrastructure at District Headquarters and at Sankoo, Drass and Zanskar were discussed and the authority concerned apprised that the construction work is under progress at all these places.

The provision of basic facilities like drinking water and toilet facilities at the existing Court Complex Kargil was discussed and the DC assured redressal of the same at the earliest. Infrastructure issues pertaining to JJB Kargil and CWC Kargil were also discussed.

Further, issues pertaining to security of Judicial Officers, construction of District Jail at Kargil and various issues pertaining to the effective execution of Court Notice/Warrant and imparting of training to the I/Os etc were discussed in detail with SSP Kargil. All the concerned departments assured redressal of the matters at the earliest.

Principal Secretary chairs 11th BoDs meeting of J&K Trade Promotion Organisation

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, May 17: Principal Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Prashant Goyal, today chaired the 11th Board of Directors (BoDs) meeting of J&K Trade Promotion Organisation (JKTPO) here at Civil Secretariat.

Managing Director, JKTPO, Khalid Jahangir, presented the agenda for meeting and apprised the board of the action taken regarding previous board decisions.

The Board deliberated upon various agenda items and also approved the Financial Statements of JKTPO for the year ending 31st March 2023 (Financial Year 2022-23).

Goyal deliberated on investment promotion and facilitation activities in J&K, wherein JKTPO shall play an important role for executing investor facilitation activities across the UT through various outreach programs and organizing sector specific events to brand J&K as investment friendly destination.

He said that an Investor facilitation Cell will be created in the JKTPO for facilitation of existing, prospective investors and applicants on Single Window Portal.

The Board approved the calendar of events proposed by JKTPO for 2023-24. The intent is to focus more on attracting investment in the region and generate employment for local population.

The Board also accorded approval regarding organizational restructuring of JKTPO from current 9 posts to 29 posts, where it was decided the proposal for the

Director, Handicrafts & Handlooms Department, Jammu, Rakesh Kumar, Additional Secretary, Finance Department were among who attended the meeting.

Besides, Samita Sethi, Secretary in Industries & Commerce Department, Tariq Ahmad Zargar, Special Secretary, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj Department, Abdul Majid Bhat, Director Finance, Higher Education Department, Suresh Koul, Director Finance, Industries & Commerce Department, Amarjeet Singh, Special Secretary, Tourism Department, RK Verma, Executive Director, representatives from Export Promotion Council of Handicraft and Sheikh Aashiq, member and representative from Carpet Export Promotion Council also attended the meeting as special invitees.

Additionally, Goyal issued several directions regarding various activities being carried out by the JKTPO to further strengthen the organization's working.

Rajat Agarwal, Executive Director, India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO), Mahmood Ahmad Shah, Director, Handicrafts & Handlooms Department, Kashmir; Tej Krishan Bhat, Special Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, Vikas Gupta,



Visitors waiting for cable ride in Gulmarg. -Excelsior/Abid Nabi

in domestic tourists, totalling 92,412, alongside 11,350 locals and 1,197 international visitors. April saw the highest figures with 120,009 domestic, 14,617 local, and 457 foreign tourists. With a cumulative count of 367,203 domestic visitors, 72,426 locals, and 4,218 international tourists, Gulmarg became a favored destination, showcasing its natural allure and warm

the overwhelmingly high demand.

Early morning long lines provide the tourist attraction vibrancy and stimulate local commerce. One Bangalore-based traveller, Rohina, expressed her joy. "I have come to Kashmir with my daughter as she wants to witness snow. The scenery is amazing, and the Gondola trip was fun. Everybody should come and visit here because it truly is heaven on earth," she said.

To accommodate intrepid travelers, the Cable Car Corporation's managing director, Jeelani Zargar, announced the rollout of the Taktal ticketing system. "Tickets used to be released months in advance, favoring those who planned their visits well in advance. However, they extended the operating hours by one hour and started the Taktal ticketing slot at 8 a.m., realizing the necessity to accommodate tourists with last-minute arrangements. This extra hour will only be used to make it easier for people who are visiting Gulmarg spontaneously to make on-the-spot ticket bookings," he said.

J&K Bank commissions CRM in Rajouri, inaugurates new branch in Baramulla

Excelsior Correspondent

SRINAGAR, May 17: Going forward on ease-of-banking for common people through digital and alternate channels, J&K Bank today commissioned a Cash Recycler Machine (CRM) at Jhangar Chowk Nowshera in district Rajouri taking the number of such machines in the zone to six.

The bank's Zonal Head



A dignitary inaugurating facility of J&K Bank.

(Rajouri) Satish Kumar inaugurated the CRM amid a gathering of valuable customers, senior citizens, local businessmen besides bank officials.

While urging the people to avail the banking services at their own convenience and comfort, the Zonal head said, "The machine will serve people of the area especially helping local traders and businessmen in cash-management while saving their valuable time and efforts."

"Commissioning of such terminal will help in reducing the customer footfall at the adjacent branches drastically," he added.

The participants appreciated the bank for the customer-friendly efforts and commitment

to facilitate better customer experience through such interventions. Pertinently, the self-service terminal accepts and dispenses cash beyond working hours of the Bank and even on holidays.

Meanwhile, as part of infrastructure upgrade, J&K Bank has relocated its SSM College Parihaspora Branch to Diver in Tehsil Pattan of Baramulla district. The Bank there open the hi-tech and a d e q u a t e l y equipped new premises for public amid a gathering of valuable customers, senior citizens and local residents.

The Bank's Zonal Head (Baramulla) Imtiyaz Ahmad Bhat inaugurated the alternate p e r m a n e n t premises in presence of Cluster Head Sheikh Muzaffar besides senior police and bank officials.

Speaking on the occasion, Zonal Head said, "In order to serve its growing customer base well and with added convenience, the Bank is upgrading its branch infrastructure wherever necessary besides expanding its network of digital and alternate channels across its area of operations."

He urged the youth to come forward and start their own projects by availing a wide range of banking products of the Bank besides other Government sponsored schemes that have been devised to meet their financial requirements.



Director Agriculture, K K Sharma releasing Dr Manoj Nazir's book at Jammu.

Director Agri releases Nazir's book on Indoor Ornamentals

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, May 17: K.K. Sharma, Director Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare, Jammu released a book titled "Indoor Ornamentals for your house" authored by Prof. Dr. Manoj Nazir at Agriculture Conference Hall, Talab Tillo.

During the release, Director Agriculture said that by selecting the right plants in the indoors, good hormones get released in the human body making people live with great peace, happiness and harmony. He congratulated the author for the excellent work and

blessed for more of such iconic releases.

R.K Hitaishi, Joint Director Agriculture (Extension) Jammu, Mahesh Verma, Joint Director SLUB, Yog Raj Slathia, Agriculture Economist, Ashwani Kumar Sharma and Dharmesh Vaid (Regional level SMSs), Ram Gopal Sharma (Chief Agriculture Officer, Ramban), Reshu Gupta (Deputy Director Planning) and Rajeev Katoch (Programme Officer, Jammu) were present during the release of the Book.

Munoo Dhar and Ravi Pandita agriculture officers were also present.

* Watch video on www.excelsiornews.com

administration and security agencies have carried out their strategic goals. They asserted that the enhanced security situation, effective tourism promotions, and increased infrastructure had helped Gulmarg solidify its position as a top travel destination for travelers looking for life-altering experiences.

From January to April 2023, Gulmarg's Tourist Office experienced a steady rise in visitor numbers. In January, domestic tourists numbered 69,383, accompanied



DC Budgam chairing a meeting on Wednesday.

Coordination meeting of Civil Admn, Police held at Budgam

Excelsior Correspondent

BUDGAM, May 17: A coordination meeting of Police and Civil administration was today convened by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo along with SSP Budgam, Tahir Gilani at DC office, here.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Budgam, Dr Akramullah

Tak; ASP Budgam, Gowher Khan; all SDMs, all Tehsilidar's and all concerned SDPOs of the district.

The DC along with the participants to ensure proactive coordination between the police and civil administration for implementing the whole of Government approach to both development and law and order issues.

Dept of Education in JU organizes Alumni Interaction Meet

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, May 17: The Department of Education, University of Jammu, organized an "Alumni Interaction Meet", in collaboration with University of Jammu Alumni Association (UJAA).

The theme of the programme was "Rejuvenating Cultural legacy of India." JKAS officer Rajinder Singh Rana, alumnus of the department, expressed his thoughts and feelings of being in the department after so many years.

A fusion folk song containing Dogri, Punjabi, Himachali, Rajasthani and Bengali songs was presented by the Ph D Scholars

completing 50 glorious years of operation. He also insisted on coming up with programmes and lectures highlighting and celebrating the educationists of the department like Prof M Varma, Prof Tanuja, Prof Ghulam Rasool and make the students and scholars aware of their valuable contributions to the field of education.

Alumnus 2014 batch Mandeep K Wazir, now serving as SI, Women Cell, Gandhi Nagar, stressed on having a clear approach towards one's goal in life. Other alumni, who share their experiences, included Anjali and Bindhya Tickoo.

Earlier, Prof Renu Nanda, Head, Department of Education,



Alumni of Dept of Education in JU with faculty members during alumni meet on Wednesday.

Dyutima and Sheetu. Anupama, alumnus 1998 batch shared feelings of joy and nostalgia of being present in the department. Dr Alka Sharma, alumnus and former scholar of Prof Renu Nanda addressed the audience with her charismatic personality and shared the importance of guidance and counselling in the life of students in order to do better in life.

Former Faculty member Prof Mubarak Singh shared his proud experiences being a part of this department as an alumnus of 1979 batch where he was one of the only 5 male members in a class of 50 students, the rest being females. He applauded the department for

took the dais and expressed how blessings and rejuvenated she felt meeting all the esteemed guests and alumni of the department and thanked them for their presence.

Earlier, Dr Kajal Devi Manhas presented welcome address. Dyutima Kesar briefed the gathering about the activities and achievements of the department.

A song was sung by students of M Ed 4th Semester, which was dedicated to the guests. Jahangir narrated poetry. Bhumika, Kiran, Sonali, Ronika, Shibani and Shivani presented Dogri folk songs of Jammu. A "Nukkad Natak" was performed turning the spotlight on the unsung heroes of Jammu.

Power employees' deputation calls on MD JPDC

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, May 17: A deputation of Jammu and Kashmir Coordination Committee of Power Employees Union today called on Managing Director, JPDC Jammu and demanded early settlement of the pending promotion cases of the employees.

The deputation of the Coordination Committee under the chairmanship of Balbir Singh Jamwal (Chairman) and assisted by general secretary, Deep Mehra, Kulbir Singh- president JKEEU Jammu province, extended gratitude to the Principal Secretary, PDD Rajesh Parsad and officials in the Administrative Department and MD JPDC, Shiv Anant Tayal for according approval to 2550/2610, 2610/3050, pending

DPC cases. It was on the basis on the recommendation of 3rd District Level Departmental Promotion Committee, Jammu held on 27-06-2022 under the chairmanship of SE, O&M Circle-I, JPDC Jammu as per under SRO 381 of 1981.

The Members of the Union further requested the MD, JPDC, Shiv Anant Tayal for the early settlement of promotion cases and also conduct DPC of Technicians III, II and I grade, as they are facing stagnation since long.

Senior members Manjit Singh, president Power Employees and Workers Union, Jasbir Singh, president ITI Employees Union, Yograj Singh president PDL/TDL Jammu, Dara Singh, Ranjeet Kumar, Vinod Padha and Sonu Mehra also accompanied.



DC Samba paying tribute to martyr.

District Samba honours martyr Major Rohit by naming school in his memory

Excelsior Correspondent

GHWAGWAL, May 17: In a touching tribute to the brave heart officers and soldiers, who sacrificed their lives for the nation, the District Administration Samba has named the Model Higher Secondary School in Ghagwal after the name of the late Major Rohit Kumar. The historic event aimed to commemorate the fallen here today.

Major Rohit Kumar, born on April 25, 1986, hailed from the village of Tappal in Ghagwal. His family has a rich history of serving in the Indian Army.

Tragically, Major Rohit Kumar made the ultimate sacrifice on September 21, 2021, during an operational sortie near Patnitop, Udhampur. He was accompanied by co-pilot Major Anuj Rajput, both of whom lost their lives.

The event, held to honor Major Rohit Kumar, was attended by his family members, including his father, Kamal Kumar, his mother, Rajni Chaigotra, his sister, Goldi, and her family, along with other relatives and community members.

Representatives of the Indian Army, including Lt. Col. Anish Vasudevan, the Officer Commanding of the unit, along with other officers, JCOs, and unit members, were present to

pay their respects.

The event was graced by dignitaries from the administration and police, including Abhishek Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Samba, who addressed the gathering comprising students, local elected representatives, DDC members, and others.

In his public address, Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the brave officers and soldiers who have laid down their lives in the service of the nation. He emphasized the importance of honoring their memory and ensuring that their sacrifices are never forgotten.

He acknowledged the courage and dedication of Major Rohit Kumar, who made the supreme sacrifice along with Major Anuj Rajput. He highlighted Major Rohit's exemplary service in the Indian Army and his family's legacy of serving the nation.

The Deputy Commissioner spoke about the significance of naming the Model Higher Secondary School in Ghagwal after Major Rohit Kumar. He explained that it is a fitting tribute to a true hero and a source of inspiration for the students who will study in the school. Shri Sharma urged the students to remember Major Rohit's bravery and sacrifice, and to strive for excellence in their own lives.



A speaker during a function at IEI Jammu.

IEI Jammu celebrates World Telecommunication & Information Society Day

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, May 17: The Institution of Engineers (India), Jammu Local Centre celebrated the World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) today with the theme "Empowering the Least Developed Countries through Information and Communication Technologies".

The event was attended by Engineers from various Departments, organizations and senior Engineers along with members of the Committee of IEI, Jammu Local Centre.

The day is celebrated every year on 17th May to mark the founding of International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies - ICTs.

The purpose of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) is to help raise awareness of the possibilities that the use of the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICT) can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide.

On this occasion, Adarsh Verma, Chief Operating officer Bharti Airtel J&K was the chief guest, whereas Prof Bhawna Sharma, Chairperson,

IEI Jammu Centre presided over the function.

Prof Bhawna Sharma said that the digitization is not happening equally all over the world and this imbalance is known as digital divide. She informed that the purpose of the day is to help raise awareness of the possibilities that use of the internet and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) can bring to societies and economies, as well as of ways to bridge the digital divide.

Adarsh Verma, Chief Operating officer Bharti Airtel J&K, stressed that corporates are taking all measures to make the last mile digital connectivity a reality and handing over the power of telecommunication into the hands of common man.

Three technical papers on the theme were presented by Er Joy Ganjoo, Member Technologist, Er Akash Dugotra, AMIE & Er Anil Kumar, AMIE.

Sachin Tickoo, MIE, Honorary Secretary conducted proceedings of the event. He said ICTs are empowering nations to achieve sustainable development goals and improve their economies. However, he added, many Least Developed Countries (LDCs), characterized by low levels of human development, weak institutional structures are still lagging behind in the adoption and utilization of ICTs and therefore, it is essential to empower LDCs through ICTs to enhance their social and economic development.



DDC Rajouri and DDC member during visit to Seri.

DDC Rajouri, DDC Member Seri lay foundation stone of Water Supply Scheme

Excelsior Correspondent

RAJOURI, May 17: District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Vikas Kundal along with DDC Member Seri, Sangeta Sharma today laid the foundation stone of the Water Supply Scheme Lamberi Upper under Jal Jeevan Mission.

The project, estimated to cost Rs 6.65 crore, will include a bore well and 5000-gallon capacity Rapid Sand Filtration plant. With the commissioning of this project, the water shortage issue in the area is expected to be mitigated to a considerable extent. The total FHTCs to be provided is 251.

The project is a significant milestone in the government's efforts to provide clean drinking water to every household, as envisioned under the Jal Jeevan Mission. The mission aims to provide tap water supply to all rural households by 2024, ensuring drinking water security and improving the health and well-being of people in rural areas.

Speaking at the event, the

District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Vikas Kundal, emphasized the importance of the Water Supply Scheme Lamberi Upper in fulfilling the government's vision of providing clean drinking water to every household.

He also highlighted that the project is a vital step towards easing the water scarcity issue faced by the residents of the area. He also said that the completion of this project will provide a reliable and sustainable source of clean drinking water and improve the quality of life of the residents.

The project is expected to benefit a large number of residents in the area, who have been facing water scarcity for a long time.

The DDC also highlighted that a significant number of schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission are currently underway in the district. He expressed his optimism that once these schemes are completed, the water shortage issue in the district will be completely resolved.



DDC Member Surankote, Shahnavaz Choudhary laying foundation stone of a link road in Surankote area of Poonch on Wednesday.

Shahnavaz lays foundation stone of Barayan-Madan Chawana road

Excelsior Correspondent

POONCH, May 17: JKPC general secretary and DDC Member from Surankote-A block, Shahnavaz Choudhary laid foundation stone of 4 km road approved under NABARD with the cost of Rs 7.5 crores from Barayan to Madan Chawana via Chhambher in Sanai Upper Panchayat in district Poonch.

A large number of local people besides AEE R&B Shafiq Chouhan, AE, JE, other department officials, PRIs, prominent people of the area were present. The people distributed sweets and garlanded Shahnavaz Choudhary to express his gratitude for fulfilling long pending demand of the area.

Speaking on the occasion Shahnavaz Choudhary said that this far flung area was completely ignored and people used to travel on-foot for hour without

the basic facilities even in this era of technology. He said that he has fulfilled his commitment with the people and said that he has taken up several other development projects in his DDC constituency in last two years, particularly the road projects to connect the far flung areas with road network.

He said that construction of this road would have a significant impact on the economic development of the area, as it will provide better connectivity and access to markets, education, health care and other essential services. He directed the department officials to ensure the quality of road work and completion on time.

Others who were present on this occasion were Sarpanch Mohd Riaz, Naib Sarpanch Javed Shah, Nambardar Sanai Ajaz Ahmed, Youth leaders Sikander Hayat, Anjum Hamdani and Asif Bajar.