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Amit Shah Chairs High-Level Meet To Review Preparations For Amarnath Yatra



Samosa, Jalebi, Pizza, Burger And More Banned During Amarnath Yatra

Reviews status of preparedness of Shri Amarnath Ji annual pilgrimage through Baltal route

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More Accommodation for Yatris!

With the imminent commencement of the Annual Amarnath Yatra next month, the Government has embarked on essential preparations, signalling a relief for the forthcoming pilgrims. Particularly noteworthy is the construction of a dedicated Yatri Niwas in Jammu, an initiative that has received the full endorsement of LG Manoj Sinha, who has further emphasized the government's plans to construct additional accommodations throughout Jammu and Kashmir. The provision of such facilities has long been an imperative requirement for seamless logistics and an enhanced experience, especially for the Yatris. It is with great satisfaction that we witness the government acknowledging this need and actively implementing plans to address it.

This timely decision to augment the number of accommodations will significantly contribute to the ease and convenience of the pilgrimage, attracting devotees from all corners of the country. Throughout the years, the Amarnath Yatra has been a recurring event, yet persistent space constraints have marred the experience for pilgrims when it comes to temporary halts due to adverse weather conditions or the need for overnight stays before embarking on the Yatra the following day. To overcome this challenge, makeshift accommodations were conventionally established, but they often gave rise to issues that hindered the smooth movement and stay of the Yatris.

However, it is encouraging to observe that a permanent solution seems imminent, as the government dedicates significant attention to augmenting the existing infrastructure and establishing new accommodations wherever necessary. As the Yatra extends for approximately 60 days this year, the government anticipates a surge in the number of visitors flocking to Kashmir to visit the revered Holy Cave. Consequently, there is a pressing demand to upgrade the facilities to cater to this expected influx of pilgrims. In this regard, both the Union Territory administration and the Government of India are collaborating closely to provide the necessary support and ensure that all facilities, especially the construction of pilgrim accommodations, are meticulously arranged well in advance of the Yatra's commencement this year.

While the LG has announced the forthcoming establishment of 4-5 additional Yatri Niwas in the Union Territory, it is highly recommended that at least 2-3 of these facilities be made operational to facilitate the Yatris this year. While it is an undeniable reality that such comprehensive infrastructure developments have been scarce in Jammu and Kashmir over the years, it won't be an exaggeration to assert that little attention has been devoted to ensuring a convenient and hassle-free travel experience for individuals undertaking the Annual Amarnath Yatra in Kashmir. However, the current scenario is witnessing a paradigm shift, as the government actively translates its expressed commitment into tangible actions. The transformative change is already discernible, and its impact will become increasingly apparent in the times ahead.

'Meet The Champions' in Kashmir Campaign

With a rousing welcome by students, son of the idyllic valley and star Winter Olympian of the nation, Arif Mohammad Khan actively kicked off the unique campaign- 'Meet The Champions' at Government SP Model Higher Secondary School in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir on May 06, 2022.

Talking about this unique initiative of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi which has today completed its 17th edition with nearly 200 students in the oldest school of picturesque valley, the Indian Alpine Skier said, "The day when our Prime Minister launched the Fit India campaign, it was a clear indication for every Indian that he

"There were times when I was about to give up due to different issues and circumstances, but I never did that since I was highly focused on what I wanted. So, do what you love to do and maintain a healthy lifestyle but never give up," replied the country's sole representative to the Beijing Winter Olympics.



wants each one of us to have proper diet regularly and make fitness a part of our daily life.”

Stressing on the intake of a balanced diet, Arif added “Santulit Aahar (balance diet) doesn’t mean you stop going to the nearby café but it’s just that anything you eat should be eaten in a balanced way.”

Meanwhile, the event also witnessed an enthusiastic gathering of students who interacted with zeal and curiosity asking many questions related to diet and fitness, challenges they face in the valley, ways to balance sports and academics etc. One of the students of SP HSS asked, “What infrastructural changes do you want to have so that Kashmir gets more international skiers?”

“There were times when I was about to give up due to different issues and circumstances, but I never did that since I was highly focused on what I wanted. So, do what you love to do and maintain a healthy lifestyle but never give up,” replied the country’s sole representative to the Beijing Winter Olympics.

Notably, he also encouraged the students to eat and understand how rich Kashmir is in terms of organic food, fresh fruits and its culinary & cuisines which carries a lot of nutrients in it. “We actually should understand how fortunate we all are in the valley where our regular, homely meals have so much of nutrition, we have orchards with different fruits and we still breathe fresh air. So, we are surrounded with everything we need to stay fit,” Arif supplemented.

This unique initiative is being organized jointly by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and the Ministry of Education and is part of the government’s ‘Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav’.

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The flight of musical dreams

Benish Ali Bhat

Two childhood friends meet after a long time in a different city and discover a common love - music.



At his home in Kashmir, Kashif is tuning the strings on his father's guitar, as his friend and partner Khalid looks on, humming some tunes. The duo is immersed in music, creating new songs in the flight or Parwaaz of their imagination.

For Kashif Iqbal and Khalid Ahmed, the founders of the Bangalore-based band 'Parwaaz: Music is lifestyle'. The two know each other from childhood, but discovered each other again, and their shared love for music, in a different city where they met after a long time in 2009. Although, this wasn't the course they had planned when they went for higher studies to Bangalore.

"I always loved music but never thought of taking it up as a career," remembers Kashif.

Khalid too had limited his singing to his room.

Their passion for music doubled when they got together and it changed their life. "When I met Kashif in Bangalore, he had already been a part of some bands and used to be on vocals. It fascinated me. We became roommates and with a shared

interest in music we knew we had to do something about it," says Khalid.

And they did by starting their own band. "In early 2010 we started our collaboration by participating in a competition in Kashif's college. By then, we were quite clear that this is what we wanted to do," adds Khalid.

From a humble beginning, the duo worked hard to establish themselves. Later, two more people Fidel D'souza and Sachin Banandur joined to complete Parwaaz. Khalid is the lead vocalist, Kashif is on guitar, Fidel and Sachin are on bass and drums and percussions respectively.

For them, originality is the key. "Ever since I learned to play the guitar, I wanted to write original music," says Kashif. "We knew we never wanted to copy," adds Khalid.

Both are self-taught musicians.

"We are self-taught musicians. Our influences in music are similar and many." Khalid names a few singers he follows including Led Zepplin whereas Kashif says, "I like melancholic playing, regardless of who is playing it."

Talking about lyrical inspirations and themes they both feel that themes just form when you start writing a song. "We never think too much while writing a song, the only thing is you need to keep a coherence from the beginning until the end. Also, when you truly feel it, you are going to write well," says Khalid.

Parwaaz is now emerging as a successful band and they have a wide audience. "Audience is our bread and butter and during our shows, we find lot of people who have memorized our songs which gives an amazing feeling."

The path to this feeling hasn't been an easy one. "In the initial three years, there were no gigs or shows but one has to strive," says Khalid.

But hard work has paid for them. "Last two years have been great. The response after our first album Baran was amazing," says Kashif with a mix of humility and pride. To them, this is just the beginning and there is still a long way to go.

"You cannot consider having one album a success. We have to make a lot more music," reacts Khalid.

For them, Kashmir is the perfect place to write and conceive new music as they stay connected to their roots. Their music proves this and many of their songs are in Kashmiri. "Kashmiri songs are loved outside, and I have seen people in our shows singing along to these songs," says Kashif.

But they don't have many hopes for the future of music or in fact their future in Kashmir. "If we were based out of here, I am sure we would be doing something else. There is no infrastructure here for a career of this sort. You could write or sing here but an artist needs practical application. An artist needs a motivation and a push which you won't get here," says Khalid.

To the aspiring singers of Kashmir, they advise staying firm and making use of YouTube and other such platforms to launch themselves.

The duos' passion for music is incredible and when asked about their greatest fear, they didn't waste a moment to reply, "That we lose interest in music." About their future they say, "Future is unpredictable, but we are sure we see ourselves improvising and creating new music."

MUSCLE MANIA

PERILOUS SUPPLEMENTS



Haika Sajad

As more and more youth in Kashmir hit the gyms to take up body building, experts say many consume large quantities of spurious diet supplements leading to health problems.

The most common supplements taken are protein shakes which doctors say should be taken only under medical supervision.

Professor of nephrology at Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura, Dr Muhammad Ashraf Bhat says that while protein is needed for the body, its use needs to be restricted in certain conditions.

“A normal person should not have problem with the protein shakes as long as high amount of fluids and water are taken along. If fluids are not taken, then the kidneys are overburdened which hampers their function,” said Dr Bhat.

“We have patients coming to us occasionally, especially youth, who take these medication and supplements. They hardly take fluids given the contents they use,” he said.

Body building supplements are dietary supplements specifically marketed for persons undertaking bodybuilding, weightlifting and athletics. Among the most widely used are vitamins, protein, branched-chain amino acids (BCAA), glutamine, essential fatty acids, meal replacement products, creatine, weight loss products and testosterone boosters. Supplements are sold either as single ingredient preparations or in the form of ‘stacks’ - proprietary blends of various supplements marketed as offering ‘synergistic advantages’. While many bodybuilding supplements are also consumed by the general public, their salience and frequency of use may differ when used specifically by bodybuilders. They may be marketed as products to replace meals, enhance weight gain, promote weight loss or improve athletic performance.

Dr Bhat is also apprehensive about the



ingredients and their proportion in various protein supplements, and is not sure if the ingredient proportion is as is written on the label.

However, medical advice is hardly heeded by the youth passionate about building their 'six packs'.

Twenty-three-year-old Umar Farooq left no stone unturned to turn his dream into reality. He became Mr. Kashmir in 2015.

"It was my dream and I do not care about side effects," Umar told Kashmir Impulse. "I spent five years for body-building," he added.

Farooq, who is doing Masters in Business Administration (MBA) in Mumbai, says initially he hit the gym to gain weight.

"I had gone for fitness but my cousin inspired me to take up body building when I was 18. Afterward, this inspiration led to passion and I made every effort to fulfil this dream," he said.

He says that it was impossible to become a body-builder without taking supplements.

"Supplements are very important for body building and one cannot even think to become a body builder without taking the supplements," Farooq said.

He doesn't want to stop at the Mr. Kashmir title and has his eyes set on the Mr. India competition, as next goal.

"I want to compete for Mr India," he said, adding that there was little scope for body building in Kashmir.

"The competitors spend a lot of money," he said, "but earn 'nothing at all.'"

As many as 50 youth from different districts of Kashmir participated in District Body Building Association Srinagar

Kashmir (DBBASK), 12th Kashmir Body Building Champion & 2nd Fitness Model show under the banner of body Building Association J&K and J&K State Sports Council on 1st June 2016.

Treasurer of DBBASK, Sajad Khan says body building should be encouraged in Kashmir.

"We do encourage other activities but body building is never given importance here," he said.

A trainer at Life Fitness gym, Wazir Bagh, Zahid Dar says that while some youth take to gym for

Dar says that protein shakes and supplements have side effects only if they are fake.

"International companies have very little chances of side effects. They are expensive," he said.

Dar, who has worked earlier as a trainer in New Delhi, also laments the lack of professional trainers in Kashmir, "Either we do not have certified trainers or the trainers in Kashmir do not want to do their jobs with dedication. Compared to the gyms outside, Kashmir is definitely lacking. Trainer is like a doctor, he should know each and every muscle part, bones etc."

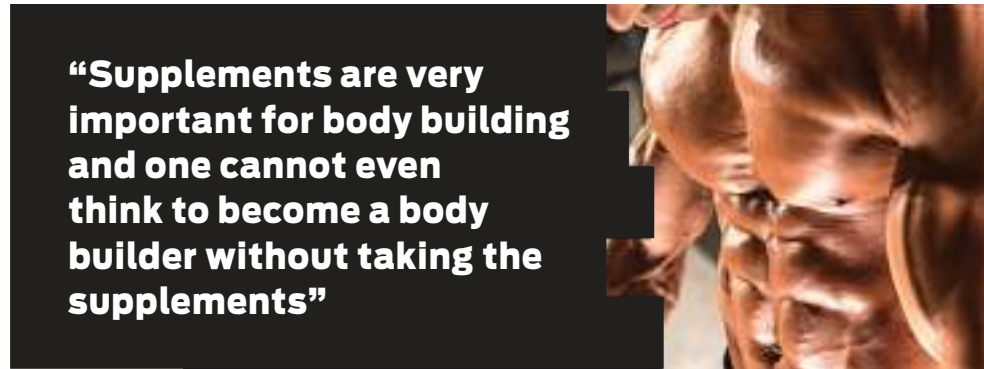
He, however, doesn't see much scope in body building as a career, and says won't advise anyone to take it up. He also does not consider it a sport.

"This is a game probably with no recognition," Dar said.

The supplements sold in various gyms in Kashmir are BSN, MuscleTech, Dymatize Nutrition, Ultimate Nutrition etc.

A trainer at Heavy Duty gym, Irfan Ali says that most of the proteins that are sold in the JK markets are fake.

Though he buys the proteins that he sells in his gym from Kashmir, he claims that the products that he buys are natural.



"Supplements are very important for body building and one cannot even think to become a body builder without taking the supplements"

body building, others go for fitness.

Body building is for the purpose of competition while as fitness is for personal health, he said.

"People come with a preconceived notion. They know what they want to attain. People with some health problems come for fitness and others for body building," Dar said.

He adds that for body building, one has to change the daily routine completely and the intake of proteins has to be high.

"Body building is not something that could be achieved in a few months. It takes years," he said.

"I do not prefer Indian products as they are not good and the supplements are important and required for body building," Ali said.

"One has to use these supplements, if he has to compete for body-building," he said.

He says that the supplements manufactured by Indian companies are not safe and unfortunately some fake companies sell the copy of the best companies in the market.

Apart from spurious supplements, Ali says that poor training can also lead to muscular imbalances.

* * * * *



CHOOSING The Right School

It's common for parents to feel anxious when it comes to choosing the right school for their children, especially in this fast growing world. For some parents the decision may be simple because of the plethora of schools at every nook and corner of the city. However, for the parents who have understood that it is time for a change, the choice becomes more challenging. In fact, these parents are very particular about their child's characteristics, personality, strengths, needs and interests. They might also consider how different school's cultures and values coexist with their family values and family life.

No doubt, we are living in 21st century but in the methodologies and the system of education in place, we are still lagging far behind. Our education system is not developed to suit the modern times. Many people are using educational institutions as business units to earn hefty income or doing their business in the name of education. The educational institutions are focussing on cramming information and the "BEST CRAMMERS" are rewarded by the system despite the fact that most of the knowledge gained through mugging up is forgotten after the semester. Rote memorization plagues our system and every student is busy in mugging up. Our education system does not develop the spirit of original thinking and inquiry. Rather it incentivizes memorizing above originality. We should have all known by now that "Memorising is no Learning". Establishing more and more schools or educational institutions is not going to solve the crisis of our education system.

Today the world has become a global village and the need of the hour is to create a global citizen with heightened human awareness of responsibilities towards world. Today the whole world is looking for leaders, risk-takers, researchers, analytical thinkers with high level of creativity. In our competitive world, parents need to choose a school that can educate students for jobs that don't exist yet. To acquire the above-mentioned characteristics, we need to come forward with a revised model of education. Cambridge could be one of the solutions for the next generation of Kashmir.

CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATION (CIE)

Cambridge is a non-profit organisation. It is directly linked to the renowned University of Cambridge in the UK. It is among the world's leading providers of international qualifications and assessments in more than 160 countries. The examination board is a division of Cambridge assessment, founded as a department of the University of Cambridge in 1858. It is delivered worldwide in schools over 160 countries and is recognised by colleges and universities in India and everywhere else in the world.

How Cambridge International Examination can help in raising our educational system?

Cambridge supports schools to develop learners who are confident in working with information and ideas, responsible for themselves and





for others, reflective, innovative and engaged both intellectually and socially who are ready to make a difference.

Cambridge includes top quality teaching and assessment resources, appropriate for teaching and learning in local and international schools.

Provides teachers with: a secure support website for Cambridge schools; teachers guides; textbooks; curriculum support resources; teacher training and online discussion forums.

The structure and content of the Cambridge syllabus does not put too much stress on students and draws out the best of them.

Cambridge promotes research-oriented study and more focus is given to the practical side of teachings.

Cambridge involves a variety of assessment techniques to test oral, practical skills, problem solving abilities, application of skills, knowledge and understanding. Thus it does away with the rote memorization, cramming and mugging.

Cambridge provides an opportunity to the students to specialize in the subjects of their choice (Choice of more than 70 subjects in secondary).

The Cambridge Check Points are the diagnostic service comprising of standardised tests that help the students by providing comprehensive feedback on their strengths and weaknesses in an elaborate manner.

Cambridge has structured their teaching methods with planning and precision to align the requirements at a global level.

Quality assurance is provided with ongoing teacher training workshops and regular evaluation and support.

Cambridge leads the way worldwide in raising education standards with the introduction of their IGCSE and A level study program.

What IGCSE has to offer?

International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), formed in 1988 is a comprehensive two-year program, spread over class 9th and 10th. Cambridge IGCSE is a globally recognized qualification similar to the class 10th examination of the CBSE, NCERT, ICSE. It is recognised by AIU (Association of Indian University). IGCSE is the most popular international qualification for 14 to 16 years old. It provides a diverse curriculum meeting the needs of 21st century learning. Following points highlights the benefits of IGCSE:

IGCSE program has worldwide status and credibility.

It is a balanced curriculum and lends an international perspective to studies.

It develops and encourages vital education skills, including oral skills, investigate skills, problem solving, team work, recall of knowledge and initiatives.

IGCSE offers a flexible curriculum, with a choice of over 70 subjects in any combination. Thus provides students an opportunity to score good grades.

The assessment is aimed at a wide ability range of students with an 8-point grading scale from A+ to G, with A+ being the highest.

Assessment includes written, oral, course work and practical assessment.

As per AIU (Association of Indian University), 5 (five) passes at IGCSE in grade A, B and C and minimum 2 (two) passes at A level of the British examining bodies is equivalent to +2 stage qualification which is the minimum eligibility required for admission to bachelor's degree program at Indian universities.

If you wish to see a practical example of Cambridge in the Valley of Kashmir, Foundation World School would be the best Cambridge partner to answer all your questions and clear all your doubts.

Managing PCOS with a proper diet

Aisha Trumboo

Polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS) or Hyper androgenic anovulation is a common endocrine system disorder among women of reproductive age. Women with PCOS may have enlarged ovaries that contain small collections of fluid (follicles) located in each ovary as seen during an ultrasound exam. The exact cause of polycystic ovary syndrome is unknown. Early diagnosis and treatment along with weight loss may reduce the risk of long-term complications, such as Type-2 diabetes and heart disease. Various studies have shown the percentage of women suffering from PCOS anywhere between 5 -10 percent in Kashmir.



Trouble maintaining a healthy weight in addition to high levels of insulin (hormone) in young women with PCOS make diet and exercise pivotal aspects in the management of PCOS. Eating the right food and avoiding the wrong food can make one feel good synergistically helping in weight loss. PCOS symptoms can thereby improve with eating well, staying active and maintaining a healthy weight or even losing some weight.

Following are a few key points:

Insulin and carbohydrates

Food intake increases the insulin level in ones blood, mostly after consumption of carbohydrates. Carbohydrates are found in grains, most snack foods, sugary drinks, and fruits and vegetables. Carbohydrates (with fibre) such as whole grains, fruits etc keep the insulin levels low. Whereas sugary or refined (soda, juice, etc) keep insulin levels high in addition to being not very filling. Thus, choose high-fibre, low-sugar carbohydrate foods most of the time.

Instead of:

- Sweetened juice, canned fruit in heavy syrup
- Starchy vegetables (potatoes, corn, and peas)
- Refined grains made with white flour such as white bread or white rice
- Sugared cereals such as Frosted Flakes®, and other sweetened grains such as cereal bars (Nutrigrain Bars®)
- Sugary drinks(soda or juice)
- Sugary foods (cookies, cakes, and candy)
- Snacks such as potato chips

Choose:

- Fresh fruits or frozen/canned fruit without added sugar,
- Non-starchy fresh vegetables or frozen/canned vegetables such as broccoli, spinach, and carrots
- Whole grains such as whole wheat pasta, brown rice, oats, and whole wheat bread
- High fibre cereals such as Kashi®, shredded wheat, and All Bran®. (Look for cereals that have at least 5 grams of fibre per serving or sprinkle ½ cup of bran cereal or unprocessed bran on a low-fibre cereal to increase the fibre)
- Water, unsweetened iced tea
- High fibre baked goods made from whole wheat flour and oats
- Crackers and snacks with fibre or popcorn

Fats and proteins

- PCOS-friendly diets include protein foods like beans, hummus, nuts, peanut butter, tofu, eggs, fish, chicken, meat, and vegetarian meat substitutes, and fats such as olive oil, nuts, and avocado.
- Olive oil, canola oil, nuts, avocados, and fish contain healthy fats. Choose healthy fats and proteins instead of butter, margarine, mayonnaise, full-fat cheese, creamy sauces or dressings, and red meat.
- Combining the two with a carbohydrate will slow down the absorption of the carbohydrate and keep insulin levels low
- A diet that is extra high in protein? No added advantage!
- These diets (eg- Atkins diet) are low in important nutrients such as fibre, B vitamins, and vitamin C. Overeating fat or protein can actually cause weight gain. A balanced diet is key!
- What about dairy, sugar, gluten, or soy?
- No current peer reviewed data supports the restriction of specific food groups or types of foods in order to improve PCOS symptoms.
- Portion sizes
- Having more frequent smaller meals and snacks will keep your insulin level lower throughout the day.

Exercise

Exercise brings down insulin levels (especially after a large meal), and also helps with weight loss. Any increase in exercise helps, so do anything you enjoy. Starting slowly, and building up to ones fitness goal is pivotal (at least 5 days a week for 60 minutes per day).



Tulail Valley preserves Kashmir's centuries-old heritage of wooden houses

|| **Sajid Raina**

Bandipora: Tulail Valley in north Kashmir's Bandipora district has preserved Kashmir's centuries-old heritage of wooden houses. Nestled amidst the breathtaking landscapes, Tulail Valley – the sub-valley of Gurez Valley – stands a testament to the enduring allure of traditional architecture and also highlights the enchanting craftsmanship of

skilled carpenters.

With a legacy that spans generations, the tradition of constructing wooden houses in Tulail Valley has stood the test of time. Here, the prevailing climatic conditions and the region's modest lifestyle have shaped a deep reverence for these unique structures. In a world dominated by concrete and steel, the residents of the valley remain steadfast in their commitment to wooden homes.



Beyond their functional benefits, the wooden houses of Tulail Valley hold a deep cultural significance. They embrace the coexistence of humans and nature, with space reserved within the homes for the presence of wild bulls that roam the Gurez region, Ismaeel added. He further said that this unique arrangement not only adds to the warmth within the houses but also contributes to the valley's distinctive character. Moreover, the houses are intentionally spaced apart, mitigating the risk of fire incidents, with the hearth areas thoughtfully protected using mud.

Shielded by majestic mountains, around ninety percent of Tulail Valley's houses are meticulously crafted using timber and mud, with tin sheet roofs crowning these architectural gems. Amidst the abundance of modern construction materials, the people of Tulail continue to value the unmatched charm and practicality offered by wooden dwellings.

Talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Muhammad Ismaeel, a resident of Tulail Valley, spoke about the “remarkable resilience” of these houses. He said, “With an average snowfall of seven feet during winter, the sturdy wooden structures prove their mettle, offering a haven of warmth and protection against the harsh elements. Skilled carpenters employ age-old techniques to intricately join the wooden beams, while a layer of mud on the interior walls provides natural insulation, keeping the interiors cool in summer and cozy in winter.”

Beyond their functional benefits, the wooden houses of Tulail Valley hold a deep cultural significance. They embrace the coexistence of humans and nature, with space reserved within the homes for the presence of wild bulls that roam the Gurez region, Ismaeel added.

He further said that this unique arrangement not only adds to the warmth within the houses but also contributes to the valley's distinctive character. Moreover, the houses are intentionally spaced apart, mitigating the risk of fire incidents, with the hearth areas thoughtfully protected using mud.

However, in the heart of Gurez Valley, the landscape is transforming, giving way to the allure of modernity. Dawar, once an epitome of traditional architecture, is witnessing a shift towards concrete constructions, risking the loss of its cultural heritage.

Muhammad Ayub, an octogenarian from Dawar, lamented the “diminishing connection with ancestral roots” and urges the community to safeguard the valley's natural beauty.

Ayub emphasized the importance of striking a balance between progress and preservation, to ensure that the legacy of wooden houses endures for future generations to cherish.

“Tulail Valley stands as a bastion of tradition, embracing its rich cultural heritage amid a changing world,” Bashir Ahmad, a local said, adding that as Gurez Valley grapples with rapid urbanization, Tulail Valley remains “a sanctuary where the spirit of craftsmanship and reverence for nature converge”.

He further said that these wooden houses embody the essence of Tulail Valley, capturing the imagination of visitors who are drawn to their timeless beauty.

Security grid, civil admin to increase synergy for incident free Amarnath Yatra

SRINAGAR: A day after the Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired a high-level meet in New Delhi, a joint conference was held in Srinagar with a focus to increase synergy and coordination between the civil and security agencies for smooth and incident-free ensuing Amarnath Yatra.

The 62-day long yatra to the 3,880 metre high holy cave shrine of Shri Amarnathji is scheduled to start on July 1 from two routes — the traditional 48-km Nunwan route in South Kashmir's Pahalgam and the 14-km Baltal route in Central Kashmir's Ganderbal. It will culminate on August 31.

"A joint security conference between security forces and civil administration officers was held with an aim to increase synergy, interaction and coordination between the civil and security agencies for the success of the upcoming Amarnath Yatra," said PRO Defence Srinagar Col Emron Musavi, in an official statement.

Col Musavi said that detailed briefing and discussions provided an "opportunity for deliberations on important issues of mutual interest impacting the security of the Yatra."

During the meet, all officials stressed the need for harmonious functioning of the government agencies to make the event successful, he stated.

"In view of the prevailing internal security situation, an overview of the security was also undertaken to ensure complete synergy between all security agencies and the civil administration for a coordinated effort towards the achievement of the laid down goals for a smooth and incident free Yatra," Col Musavi said.

Notably, on June 9, the Union Home Minister had reviewed the security and other arrangements for the Amarnath Yatra at a high-level meeting in the union capital, with the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

Army's Northern Commander Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi too had attended the meeting which was also participated by the Union Home Secretary

Ajay Kumar Bhalla, J&K Chief Secretary Arun Kumar Mehta, Additional Chief Secretary Home Raj Kumar Goyal, Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Principal Secretary to LG Dr Mandep K Bhandari, J&K Director General of Police Dilbag Singh, Director Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka and Director Generals of Border Security Force, CRPF and BRO besides other senior officers.

Though the foolproof security and other arrangements for Yatra have always been a priority for the government, this time the security grid anticipates threat perception a notch up. They believe that the successful culmination of the G20 summit in Srinagar has increased the frustration among the subversive elements and hence the desperate attempts on their part are not being ruled out.

During the meeting, the Union Home Minister had directed to ensure adequate security arrangements at cave shrine, twin yatra routes of Chandanwari, Baltal besides Srinagar-Jammu and Jammu-Pathankot National Highways.

Army plays a crucial role in the security arrangements at all these places which witness heavy deployment of Central Para Military Forces (CPMFs), including the additional forces deployed especially for Yatra period, besides JKP personnel.

Describing it as a priority of the central government led by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure "comfortable Yatra" for the pilgrims, the Home Minister had issued a slew of directions for smooth arrangements on the route from the airport and railway station to the Yatra base camp, besides foolproof security arrangements.

Directions encompassed air service from Srinagar and Jammu at night for pilgrims; better communication system on the Yatra route; RFID cards for pilgrims to trace their real time location; insurance coverage of Rs 5 lakh for each Amarnath Yatri and Rs 50,000 for each animal and arrangements for tent city, Wi-Fi hotspots on the travel route.

Amit Shah Chairs High-Level Meet To Review Preparations For Amarnath Yatra



New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said the Narendra Modi government's priority is to ensure that Amarnath pilgrims have a comfortable visit and directed officials to make adequate security arrangements along the entire pilgrimage route in Jammu and Kashmir.

The homeminister said this while chairing a high-level meeting where he took stock of the preparations for the Amarnath pilgrimage with top officials of the central government, Army and the Jammu and Kashmir administration.

The 62-day-long annual pilgrimage to the cave shrine of Amarnath, located at a height of 3,880 metres in the south Kashmir Himalayas, will begin on July 1

and continue till August 31.

During the meeting, the home minister said it is the priority of the Narendra Modi government that Amarnath pilgrims should have comfortable "darshan" and should not face any difficulty. He directed officials to make adequate security arrangements on the entire route of the Amarnath pilgrimage, according to an official statement.

The pilgrims travel through two routes -- Baltal and Pahalgam -- in Jammu and Kashmir.

At the meeting, it was apprised that all the pilgrims will be given RFID cards so that their real-time location can be traced and everyone will be given ₹5 lakh insurance cover. There will be insurance coverage of

₹50,000 for each animal carrying pilgrims.

Mr Shah stressed providing smooth arrangements on the route from the airport and railway station to the pilgrimage base camp and directed to make available air service from Srinagar and Jammu at night for the convenience of the pilgrims.

The home minister also directed to ensure adequate stock of oxygen cylinders and their refilling and asked for availability of additional teams of doctors.

He directed to ensure adequate number of medical beds and deployment of ambulances and helicopters to meet any medical emergency.

Shah gave instructions to make proper arrangements for all necessary facilities for the pilgrims and that include travel, stay, electricity, water, communication and health. He directed to ensure better communication system on the pilgrimage routes and deployment of machines to immediately open routes in case of a landslide. Besides, arrangements for tent city, Wi-Fi hotspots and proper lighting will be made on the travel routes. Additionally, online-live "Darshan of Baba Barfani", live telecast of morning and evening "aarti" in the holy Amarnath cave and religious and cultural programmes will be organised at the base camps, the statement said.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj

Sinha, the Army's Northern Command chief Lieutenant General Upendra Dwivedi, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, Director of Intelligence Bureau Tapan Dekha were among the top functionaries who attended the meeting.

Sources said all stakeholders of the pilgrimage have taken part in the meeting and all issues relating to arrangements being made for it have been discussed.

Last year, 3.45 lakh people visited the holy cave and this year, the figure could go up to 5 lakh, they said.

The sources said that to avoid any incident like last year's flash flood which claimed 16 lives near the shrine, the National Disaster Response Force has started identifying ideal locations for setting up pilgrim camps keeping in mind any possible unforeseen natural disaster.

Indian Air Force helicopters are expected to be deployed to carry out aerial sorties in the upper reaches of the holy cave to check for glacial events and the formation of lakes that may trigger flash floods downhill.

Last year, such sorties were conducted only after the flash floods occurred in June, but this year, the exercise will be undertaken before the start of the pilgrimage and at continuous intervals during the two-month yatra, the sources said.



The aerial surveys may be conducted by a team with expertise in remote sensing and satellite, hydrology and disaster response. Once a dangerous water build-up is spotted, contingency measures will be taken all along the pilgrimage route, especially in the areas near the cave shrine, they added.

Recently, a lot of snow has been found along both the routes - Baltal and Pahalgam - leading to the holy cave and therefore the Border Roads Organisation has been given the task to clear the snow by June 15, the sources said.

Meanwhile, Acting tough on junk and unhealthy food, Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) said that foods, including halwa puri, samosas, jalebi, gulab jamun, etc., will not be served to Yatris during this year's Himalayan pilgrimage.

This year's 62-day long Amaranth Yatra will begin on July 1.

SASB officials said that over 120 langars (community Kitchens) are being established this year for the pilgrims along the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal leading to the cave shrine.

"Focusing on the health of the pilgrims, SASB has released a list of permitted and banned meals, food items at 'langars' and made it clear that no junk and fried food will be allowed to be served at around 120 langars," an official said.

A list of banned and permitted items has also been shared with the langer authorities.

The banned food items included poori, bathura, pizza, burgar, stuffed parantha, dosa, fried Roti, bread with butter, cream based foods, pickle, chutney, fried papad, chowmein and all other fried / fast foods, cold drinks and karrah halwa, jalebi, gulab jamun, laddu, khoya burfi, rasgulla and all other halwai items besides snacks (high in fat and salts) chips/ kurkure, matthi, namkeen mixture, pakora, samosa, fried dry fruits and all other deep fried items.

It also included non vegetarian foods, alcohol, tobacco, gutka, pan masala, cigarettes, other intoxicants.

The meals in the permitted menu include cereals, pulses, green vegetables, green salad, fruits and sprouts, rice, jaggery, sambar, idli, uttapam, poha, herbal tea, coffee, low fat curd, sharbat, lemon squash/ water, figs, raisins, apricots, and other dry fruits.

Moreover, Director Health Services Jammu and Kashmir have directed all concerned officials not to sanction or forward leave applications of doctors and para medical staff during the period of yatra.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha visited Baltal today and reviewed the status of

preparedness of Shri Amarnath Ji annual pilgrimage through Baltal route.

Before on-site inspection, a review meeting was held at Sonamarg that was attended by Dr Mandeep Kumar Bhandari, CEO, Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board; Ms. Mandeep Kaur, Commissioner/Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj; Sh Vijay Kumar, ADGP Kashmir; Sh Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir and senior officials of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, Civil Administration, Police, CAPFs and Army.

The Lt Governor took appraisal of the arrangements put in place for healthcare, electricity, communication, water supply and sanitation, weather forecasting, disaster management, security grid and all other basic necessities for the pilgrims.

He directed the officials to ensure Yatra Base Camp has adequate number of doctors, staff, equipment, medicines and oxygen cylinders. BRO was instructed to mobilize resources and finish all works before commencement of Yatra.

Since Yatra is in difficult terrain at an altitude where the oxygen levels are low, healthcare facilities, care around the clock must be ensured, said the Lt Governor.

The Lt Governor impressed upon the officials to ensure communication services on yatra route and night air services. He further directed for fitting tented accommodations with fire extinguishing equipment.

Overall arrangements for Yatra have been upgraded. All the concerned departments to take necessary steps for making the pilgrimage convenient, safe and hassle-free. At Yatra Base Camp in Baltal, the Lt Governor inspected the ongoing work at DRDO's Hospital and other facilities for the pilgrims.

It was informed that the hospital will be made functional by 17th June.

Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Secretary Tourism Department; Dr Raghav Langer, Secretary Planning, Development and Monitoring Department and Sh Shyambir, Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal were also present. Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha visited Pahalgam, today and reviewed the arrangements and ongoing works ahead of Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra, starting from 1st July.

The Lt Governor conducted on-site inspection at Nunwan and Chandanwari Base Camps and reviewed ongoing works and logistics, lodging, health and other facilities that have been put in place for the comfort of pilgrims.

Subsequently, a meeting was held that was attended by Sh Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary,

Agriculture Production Department; Sh Shailendra Kumar, Principal Secretary, Public Works (R&B); Dr Mandep Kumar Bhandari, CEO, Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board; Sh Vijay Kumar, ADGP Kashmir and Sh Vijay Kumar Bidhuri, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir.

The Lt Governor appraised the elaborate arrangements put in place by all the stakeholder departments pertaining to the snow clearances of all sections of tracks, deployment of trained manpower, Helipads operations, health facilities, water and power supply at transit camps and halt points, allotment of tents and shops, Disaster Management, contingency plan for accommodation, etc.

The Lt Governor directed the concerned departments to make all necessary services accessible to the pilgrims at railway station, airports, on travel routes and Yatra base camps.

The Lt Governor impressed upon the officials to create a strong healthcare and health emergency infrastructure with additional teams of doctors and nursing staff. He further asked them to harness the benefits of technology to deal with any emergent situation. Proper arrangements for regular ambulance, Heli-ambulance service and oxygen cylinders must be ensured, the Lt Governor told the officials.

He also took stock of the arrangements being made for drinking water and sanitation and facilities for sanitation workers deployed to ensure cleanliness at the Base Camps. The Lt Governor passed explicit directions for the Camp in-charge and concerned officials for operationalization of Sheshnag and Panjarni camp by 20th June.

It must be ensured that the Track is through for ponies, Pithoos from Chandanwari to holy cave well before the commencement of the Yatra, he said.

The Lt Governor set the deadline of 20th June for the completion of various works including snow clearance at MG Top, Panjarni and other such areas; completion of emergency landing platform at holy cave; boundary walls, safety railing on vulnerable stretches; water supply and installation of RO in every camp.

Power supply and illumination in every camp should be done by June 17th. Health facilities and availability of health equipments should be ensured. SoP by Health Department to be made operational at each camp, the Lt Governor told the officials.

The Lt Governor directed the KPDCL and Jal Shakti department for engaging skilled manpower and day-to-day monitoring of water and power logistics.

The Lt Governor emphasized on involvement of



members of the PRIs and Civil society in successful conduct of Shri Amarnathji Yatra.

We must learn from the challenges of last year and take comprehensive measures accordingly. All the concerned departments, CAPFs, J&K Police, Army and other stakeholders should work in close coordination for making best arrangements to ensure smooth pilgrimage. A feedback on tracks from civil administration, Security forces should also be taken, he added. Work on the Steel girder bridges will be completed well before the commencement of the Yatra, it was informed.

The Lt Governor directed the officials to lay special focus on Sanitation, Quality of tents, fire extinguishers and ensure adequate gaps during installation of tents. No unauthorised tent should be installed. Strict enforcement of SOPs and guidelines must be ensured near holy cave, he added.

The Lt Governor directed the Irrigation and Flood Control department to complete the Nallah works by June 25th Instructions were also passed pertaining to installation of LED at various locations with pre-recorded messages and information dissemination, upgradation of Signages and information boards, besides ensuring strong telecom and mobile connectivity.

Sh Bhupinder Kumar, Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department; Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Secretary Tourism Department; Sh Syeed Fakhruddin Hamid, Deputy Commissioner, Anantnag, senior officials of Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, Civil Administration, Police, CAPFs and Army also attended the meeting.



CJ visit to court complex Char-e-Shreef

Pays obeisance at Ziyarat of Sheikh ul Aalam

|| Nissar Yatoo

BUDGAM: Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, N. Kotiswar Singh, recently visited the Court Complex, Char-e-Shreef.

He was received by Principal District and Sessions Judge, Budgam, Khalil Ahmad Choudhary and Fakrun Nisa, Munsif/ judicial Magistrate Char-e-Shreef and members of bar.

On the occasion, Chief Justice was accorded ceremonial guard of honour from the contingent of J & K Police.

Chief Justice inspected the Court Complex and also interacted with members of the bar. The purpose of the inspection was to ensure smooth functioning of the judicial infrastructure, identify areas for improvement and address any concerns raised by the legal community.

Chief Justice gave patient hearing to the members of bar and emphasized the commitment of judiciary to provide fair and efficient justice to the people, ensuring the rule of law.

Chief Justice also paid obeisance at the sacred

Ziyarat-e-Shreef Sheikh Ul Aalam (RA). This revered shrine holds immense historical and religious significance and symbolizes the unity and harmony among people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Later, Chief Justice inaugurated Legal Services and Awareness Camp on “Welfare Schemes for Tribals” organized by The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam, in collaboration with district administration Budgam and the Tribal Affairs Department. He also serves as the Patron-in-chief of the JK Legal Services Authority.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, Judge of High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Executive Chairman of JK Legal Services Authority and Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary, Tribal Affairs, attended the event as guests of honour.

The event was also attended by Shahzad Azeem, Registrar General, High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, M.K. Sharma, Principal Secretary to Chief Justice, Khalil Ahmad Choudhary Principal District & Session’s Judge, Budgam (Chairman DLSA Budgam), Akshay Labru, District Development Commissioner, Budgam, Tahir Geelani SSP Budgam, Ikramullah Tak

ADDC Budgam, Chief Medical Officer Budgam, District Social Welfare Officer Budgam, Assistant Labour Commissioner Budgam and Executive Engineer R & B division Budgam, Executive Engineer R & B division Chadoora and District Officers of other departments.

The Legal Services and Awareness Camp was aimed to provide valuable legal knowledge and promote welfare schemes available for the tribal communities in Jammu and Kashmir. With the support and active participation of various government departments, including Social Welfare Department, Tribal Affairs Department, Animal Husbandry Department, Sheep Husbandry Department, Department of Youth Services and Supports, NRLM, Labour and Employment Departments, Jammu and Kashmir Bank, Revenue Department, Department of Health Services, Rural Development Department, Handloom/Handicraft Departments, Department of Agriculture, Department of Horticulture and Department of Industries and Commerce, the event witnessed a comprehensive and holistic approach towards empowering the tribal population.

Chief Justice, in his presidential address, appreciated the efforts of DLSA Budgam and other departments for reaching out to common masses in far flung areas. He stated that presence of government departments at legal services camps shall enable the tribal community to directly interact with the representatives and officials, enabling them to gain in-depth knowledge about the schemes and services available to them. He assured the establishment of legal aid clinic at tribal area in which passionate youth of tribal community are engaged as para legal volunteers, who shall facilitate implementation of various Welfare Schemes of Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

Justice Tashi Rabstan, in his address, stated and emphasized the implementation of comprehensive range of welfare schemes to uplift lives of tribals and ensure their holistic development. These schemes have been designed with the aim of providing equitable opportunities, promoting socio-economic empowerment, preserving tribal culture and securing a brighter future for the tribal communities.

Shahid Iqbal Choudhary assured the maximum reach to the Tribal Community by facilitating them through proper implementation of tribal welfare schemes.

One of the highlights of the camp was distribution of sanction letters and benefits sanctioned under

various welfare Schemes among the beneficiaries, ensuring that the welfare schemes reach the intended individuals and communities.

The active involvement Chief Justice N. Kotiswar Singh and Justice Tashi Rabstan in this process earned them special praiseworthy mention for their dedication and commitment towards securing justice and promoting the well-being of the tribal population.

Chief Justice and Justice Tashi Rabstan also distributed compensation cheques sanctioned by Jammu & Kashmir Legal Services Authority under Victim Compensation Scheme among the beneficiaries.

This event witnessed a collaborative effort from various departments and agencies that have tirelessly worked towards the welfare of the tribal community.

The departments which actively participated in the event and set up stalls to disseminate information and provide assistance to tribal beneficiaries included Social Welfare Department Tribal Affairs Department, Animal Husbandry Department, Sheep Husbandry Department, Department of Youth Services and Supports, NRLM (National Rural Livelihood Mission), Labour and Employment Departments, Jammu and Kashmir Bank, Revenue Department, Department of Health Services Rural Development Department, Department of Revenue, Handloom/Handicraft Departments, Department of Agriculture, Department of Horticulture, Department of Industries and Commerce.

The presence of these departments facilitated direct interaction between beneficiaries and government officials, enabling individuals to gain comprehensive insights into various welfare schemes and services available to them. Moreover, it provided an opportunity for beneficiaries to clarify their doubts and seek guidance directly from the concerned authorities.

The Legal Services and Awareness Camp provided an excellent platform for the tribal communities to engage with various government departments and gain insights into the available schemes and services.

The event witnessed a significant turnout, reflecting the shared commitment of all stakeholders towards ensuring access to justice and welfare for the tribal population. It served as a testament to the dedication and hard work put in by the organizing committee, volunteers, and all the participating departments to create a meaningful impact on the lives of the tribals in Jammu and Kashmir

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Abhishek Golecha

Elevating Creative Direction for Julius Dein's magic videos Making Waves Overseas

Abhishek Golecha thrilled the audiences with his spellbinding Direction for the famous magician Julius Dein's magic videos

Mumbai, Jun 13: Abhishek Golecha, a young talent hailing from Jodhpur, is one such visionary who has been making a significant impact on the international scene. With his exceptional skills and unique perspective, he has caught the attention of renowned magician Julius Dein and is actively collaborating with him. Abhishek's rapid rise to prominence not only showcases his immense talent but also makes his home country proud of his accomplishments within a remarkably short span of time.

Abhishek Golecha is also known for his remarkable AI designs. He has been working with Bollywood celebrities for their brand designs and has also been collaborating with many big brands. Abhishek is a true example of talent with creativity. His creative brilliance and unyielding dedication have also caught the attention of Julius Dein, a globally renowned magician known for his captivating performances and online presence having more than 65 million followers on his social media platforms and also having 40-50 million views on his videos. By recognizing Abhishek's unique talent for creative direction, Julius and Abhishek have been working together since more than 4 years collaborating on various projects to build a massive community for Magicians. Together, they began creating spellbinding content that took the world by storm.

Julius Dein on collaborating with Abhishek says: "Abhishek Golecha is an exceptional creative director, having skilfully directed my shows for many years. His unique vision and meticulous execution never fail to captivate and thrill my audience. His distinct style of creative direction, which seamlessly merges storytelling with stunning visuals, resonated with my



audiences worldwide".

Abhishek Golecha's meteoric rise in the world of creative direction, fuelled by his collaboration with magician Julius Dein, is a testament to his immense talent and unwavering dedication. From his roots in Jodhpur, he has managed to make a significant impact on the global stage, solidifying his position as a rising star. Through his work, Abhishek has managed to leave a lasting impression on viewers and elevate the impact of Julius' performances.

As he continues to break new ground and captivate audiences worldwide, Abhishek Golecha is undoubtedly making his country proud and serving as an inspiration to aspiring artists. With his creative vision and determination, he is set to conquer.

Yolo Health Foundation and HealthATM India to Launch 500 Health ATMs in Association with the State Governments of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh

NEW DELHI: Yolo Health Foundation and HealthATM India, in partnership with the respective state governments, government hospitals, and private hospitals, are poised to bring a healthcare revolution to Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh, by launching 500 state-of-the-art Health ATMs in the next 2 months. These Health ATMs aim at providing primary and preventive healthcare services, making it easily accessible to the public. This pioneering initiative marks a significant milestone in bridging the gap in healthcare access, empowering individuals, and fostering healthier communities.

Yolo Health Foundation and Health ATM India are at the forefront of healthcare innovation, committed to redefining the way healthcare is accessed and experienced. With their visionary approach and cutting-edge technology, they are revolutionizing the landscape of healthcare accessibility in India. These HealthATMs are designed with a high resolution camera & touch-screen and are capable to detect more than 60 parameters in just a few minutes. The introduction of 500 Health ATMs across these regions represents a transformative leap forward, bringing high-quality healthcare services within reach of millions.

Mr. Vinayak Kumar, Founder & MD of Yolo Health Foundation and HealthATM India shared his enthusiasm for the initiative, stating, "We are thrilled to announce the launch of new 500 Health ATMs, marking a significant step towards revolutionizing healthcare access in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh. Our vision is to empower individuals, regardless of their location or background, to take control of their health and well-being. With these state-of-the-art ATMs, we are bringing accessible and quality healthcare closer to communities. #HealthcareRevolution #YoloHealthATM"

With the installation of these cutting-edge Health ATMs, high-quality healthcare is just a few steps away. Currently, a substantial number of Health ATMs have

already been installed in some states in India - 20 in Punjab, 15 in Rajasthan, 250 in Uttar Pradesh, and 100 in Arunachal Pradesh and 1000+ Health ATMs in Africa and Middle East as well. These ATMs are equipped with state-of-the-art technology and advanced medical devices, offering an extensive range of health check-ups and screenings.

How does Yolo Health ATM work

Yolo Health ATMs are advanced healthcare kiosks that provide convenient and accessible health screening services. Equipped with state-of-the-art technology and medical devices, these ATMs offer a range of health check-ups and screenings, including vital signs monitoring, blood pressure measurement, body composition analysis, and basic diagnostics. Users simply interact with the touch-screen interface to select the desired health service, and within moments, the ATM generates immediate health reports and personalized recommendations based on the collected data. With 24/7 availability and autonomous operation, Yolo Health ATMs break down barriers to healthcare access, allowing individuals to proactively manage their health conveniently and make informed decisions about their well-being.

Mr. Vinayak Kumar passionately highlighted the transformative impact of Yolo Health ATMs, stating, "With our innovative Health ATMs, we are tearing down the walls of healthcare inaccessibility, particularly in rural areas, empowering individuals to reclaim ownership of their well-being. By seamlessly integrating cutting-edge technology into their everyday lives, we are spearheading a healthcare revolution in India, ensuring that quality healthcare is within everyone's reach. #BreakingBarriers #EmpoweringHealthcare"

The impact of Yolo Health ATMs is particularly significant in rural areas where healthcare accessibility is often limited. These ATMs operate autonomously, eliminating the need for extensive medical infrastructure or personnel. With round-the-clock availability, geographical barriers are overcome, and individuals in remote locations can now access vital healthcare services effortlessly.



Bangus Valley

The Bangus Valley is a sub valley located in Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Bangus valley is a sub valley located in Kashmir Valley. It is situated to the West of Handwara town along the Mawri River in the Kupwara District. It is about 29 km away from block kralpora. Bangus valley is one of the best places to visit in Kashmir. It is also a great place for adventure as well.

The term Bangus comes from Sanskrit word Van (Forest) and gus (grass).

Geography

Bangus is about 150 Kilometers away from Srinagar and lies at an altitude of 10,000 ft. above sea level. The principal valley is locally known as "Boud Bangus" (Big Bangus) and has an estimated area of about 300 Square Kilometers. It consists of a linear elliptical bowl aligned along the east-west axis and is surrounded by Rajwar and Mawar in the east, Shamasbury and Dajlungun Mountains in the west and Chowkibal and

Karnah Guli in the north. Kazinag Range (Up to 4732 meters from sea level) in the south. A smaller valley known as "Lokut Bangus" (Small Bangus) lies on the north-eastern side of the main valley.[1] There are three routes to visit this place viz Chowkibal, Mawar Langate, Rajwar Handwara. This place is best suitable for trackers.

The valley is traversed by many small streams with nearly 14 tributaries, including the Roshan Kul, Tillwan Kul and Douda Kul. The water of these streams form one of the headwaters of the Kamil River which in turn joins the Lolab stream, thus forming the Pohru River.

Flora and fauna

Bangus is replete with a diverse variety of flora and fauna. The meadows and the slopes of the side plateaus are covered with a range of flowers and medicinal plants. Fresh water fishes of moderate size and their fingerlings inhabit the streams. The valley's forests and

plains serve as the breeding, feeding and protection grounds for many wild animal species. The wild life of includes about 50 species of animals and about 10 species of birds. The animal species include the musk deer, antelope, snow leopard, brown bear, black bear, monkeys, and red fox.[1] A large number of residents and migratory birds can also be found feeding and breeding in the valley. The prominent resident birds include pheasants, tragophan, monal pheasant, black partridge, bush quail, and wild fowl.

Tourism

Bangus has remained largely restricted and an unfavorable tourist spot due to the armed conflict that affects this area, and also due to the lack of infrastructure. However, in recent years, efforts have been made to bring the valley on the tourist map

Bangus has remained largely restricted and an unfavorable tourist spot due to the conflict that largely affected this area. However, in recent years, efforts have been made to bring the valley on the tourist map. Bangus valley is now coming up as one of the most exotic places in Kashmir.

'Bungus Awaam Mela'

Lieutenant Governor (LG), Manoj Sinha recently inaugurated the "Bungus Awaam Mela" amidst grand arrangements for village games, exhilarating local performances, and other activities to celebrate the 75th year of Independence at Bungus valley.

The LG said that the spirit of celebration among the local population is a befitting response to all those who try to vitiate the atmosphere of peace and development. He noted that the government is continuously



The valley is traversed by many small streams with nearly 14 tributaries, including the Roshan Kul, Tillwan Kul and Douda Kul. The water of these streams forms one of the headwaters of the Kamil River; which in turn joins the Lolab stream, forming the Pohru River.

working to reach out to the last person in the queue with all developmental and welfare schemes.

Speaking on the occasion, the LG observed, "J&K is progressing rapidly in every sphere of life and the administration is working continuously towards achieving

the goal of building a sustainable and prosperous UT.”

Noting that Bungus valley has the tourism potential to change the entire socio-economic landscape of the region, the LG said that the UT administration has been working in a mission mode to promote the unexplored, untapped tourism potential of this valley, among others. He further informed that permissions to visit the Bungus valley have been relaxed now.

To make the Bungus valley environmentally sustainable, the LG directed the Forests and Tourism Department to chart out viable “Eco-Tourism” plan for the region and all other prominent beautiful grasslands and meadows in the UT. He also suggested for undertaking a feasibility study for starting a cable car in this trekker’s paradise.

“Environment and Development are complementary to each other, we have to prioritize providing facilities in a scientific manner especially in places that are in Ecologically Sensitive Zones,” the LG observed.

Majestic place

The Valley is as beautiful as Gulmarg and Pahalgam, but less spoiled and more pristine. The principal valley is locally known as ‘Boud Bangus’ (Big Bangus) and has an estimated area of about 300 Square Kilometers. It consists of a linear elliptical bowl aligned along the east-west axis and is surrounded by Rajwar and Mawar in the east, Shamasbury and Dajlungun Mountains in the west, Chowkibal and Karnah Guli in the north

and Leepa Mountains in the south. A smaller valley, known as ‘Lokut Bangus’ (small Bangus), lies on the north-eastern side of the main valley. Both the valleys comprise level green meadows surrounded by low lying mountains covered with dense pine forests.

The Valley has two routes through which people can reach the place, one is from Mawar, Handwara and the second one is from Chowkibal, Kupwara. The Bangus valley is a part of a unique ecological area, comprising mountains, grassland and Coniferous forest. This valley is replete with natural vegetation and flowers of wild nature. The meadows and the slopes of the side plateaus are covered with a range of flowers and medicinal plants. Freshwater fishes of moderate size and their fingerlings inhabit the streams. The valley's forests and plains serve as the breeding, feeding and protection grounds for many wild animal species. The wildlife includes about 50 species of animals and about 10 species of birds. The animal species include the musk deer, antelope, snow leopard, brown bear, black bear, monkeys, and red fox.

A large number of resident and migratory birds can also be found feeding and breeding in the valley. The prominent resident birds include pheasants, tragopan, monal pheasant, black partridge, bush quail, and wildfowl. The vast green plains look like natural tapestries, as if spread by divine hands. Extreme natural beauty, serenity, splendour are few synonyms associated with the majestic Valley of Bangus.





CRAFT A CAREER

Benish Ali Bhat

There was a time when a career in handicrafts was possible only through association with the trade. But now, there is a professional course available that helps you get valuable insights if you are an outsider to the sector, or helps you take your traditional craft to new heights.

“Handicrafts is the second largest employment provider in J&K after agriculture, employing around three lac people and has the scope to employ more,” says Yasir A. Mir, a teacher at the Craft Development Institute, Srinagar.

Craft development Institute (CDI) Srinagar offers professional educational programmes for young people looking for careers and entrepreneurial opportunities in the handicrafts sector.

CDI offers Master’s degree in Craft Management and Entrepreneurship, a course that is aimed at skill development, designing and marketing of handicrafts.

“Our main aim is to develop professional and skilled human resource,” says Yasir. “We teach them to become entrepreneurs and (who can) start their own ventures.”

Established in 2004 CDI used to offer different courses from the beginning and since 2012, it offers a full time Master’s course in affiliation with University of Kashmir. The course comes under the faculty of Commerce and Management.

Graduates from any field, with 50% marks (45% for reserved categories) can apply for the course. The candidates need to sit in MAT and DAT tests conducted by the University of Kashmir.

“CDI is mentoring new generation artisans through skill-based training and workshops. CDI also helps regional craftspeople to adopt the current requirements of quality and production while assisting them in contemporary designs and market trends,” said Yasir.

Yasir says that many of the pass outs of CDI have been able to start their own ventures and are doing well.

Jehangir Bhat is one such example. Bhat deals with Crewel and chain stitch handicrafts at Artisan Avenue, a venture he started in 2013.

“Whatever I have been able to achieve is because of CDI and the training I received from there. We were taught everything right from starting a handicraft business to design and then marketing,” says

Bhat who graduated from CDI in 2011, and then worked for two years outside Kashmir to gain experience before starting his own business.

Bhat said the curriculum at CDI had been properly drafted and was fully entrepreneurship oriented.

CDI draws inspiration from the rich heritage of arts and crafts in Jammu & Kashmir and brings together various stakeholders, individuals and agencies working in the sector to implement a sustainable development process.

“CDI adopts a holistic approach to handicrafts development by maximising the potential of skill-based activities, in as many ways as possible,” adds Yasir.

The Master’s degree is designed to train a student to start new handicraft business ventures. The thrust is on using contemporary designs and technology while maintaining the traditional feel of the handicrafts. Those who don’t want to start right away can join different organisations to gain firsthand experience.

By providing a forum for creative exchange and knowledge creation across design, management and technology, CDI is trying to ensure new avenues for innovation and entrepreneurship in handicrafts.



Overcome Depression without Medication

To overcome depression, it helps to know the facts. Depression is a medical condition and not “laziness” or a temporary response to normal grief and/or discouragement.

Symptoms of Depression

A major depressive episode is defined as experiencing five or more of the following symptoms every day (or most days) for two weeks or more:

- || **Depressed or irritable mood**
- || **Sleep problems (i.e., sleeping too much or too little; sleeping mainly during the day)**
- || **Change in interests (i.e., not being interested in what you used to enjoy) or low motivation**
- || **Excessive guilt or unrealistically low self-image**

- || **Significantly low energy and/or change in self-care (i.e., not showering anymore)**
- || **Significantly worse concentration (i.e., sharp decline in grades or performance)**
- || **Changes in appetite (i.e., eating too much or too little)**
- || **Agitation or severe anxiety/panic attacks**
- || **Suicidal thoughts, plans or behaviors — including self-harm (i.e., intentionally cutting or burning yourself)**

It’s important to remember that not everyone who is depressed is suicidal. You can still seek help even if you haven’t demonstrated any specific suicidal or self-harm behaviors, or even if your symptoms aren’t as severe or persistent as the symptoms noted above.

OK, I’m feeling depressed... so now what?

Now that you know the symptoms of depression, some positive coping skills can be useful. All of the following techniques are supported by scientific research and medication prescribers — like psychiatrists — and these skills are frequently recommended as important parts of treatment even for patients who continue to take antidepressant medications.

WARNING: Do not suddenly go off your prescribed antidepressant medications without first talking to your medical provider. Discuss any questions or concerns about the side effects of your medications with your provider.

Practice These Coping Skills Every Day

I recommend doing many — if not all — of the following coping skills and techniques once a day when experiencing depression. It's important to know you probably won't be motivated to do any of them at first because depression frequently saps motivation. In other words, know that it's normal to feel unmotivated until you're halfway done.

The patients I work with who frequently practice these coping skills get better. The seven techniques can be memorized with the acronym MY PEERS.

1. Meaning: Find small ways to be of service to others.

Find personal meaning by serving something larger than yourself. Remember service doesn't have to be big to count. Consider this, "Success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue... as the unintended side effect of one's personal dedication to a course greater than oneself." – Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*

2. Your goals: Find workable goals that give you a sense of accomplishment.

Most people feel guilty when talking about goals because they set unreasonable or unworkable goals. A goal is workable if it's:

- || **Something you can control (i.e., it doesn't depend on others)**
- || **Manageable (i.e., not overwhelming)**
- || **Realistic for you (not for someone else)**
- || **Measurable (i.e., you know whether or not it is done or getting done)**

If something goes wrong with your goal, adopt a "what can I learn from this?" attitude (versus a judgmental, "this is why I'm horrible" attitude). Also, be careful when comparing your progress with others. We usually compare our biggest weakness with another person's biggest strength. This is unfair (and usually not accurate anyhow).

3. Pleasant Events: Schedule pleasant activities or events.

Don't wait for yourself to be "in the mood." For example, give yourself permission for a 30-minute "vacation" or schedule a healthy hobby every day. Just remember to do these activities with the right attitude (see Engagement). Also, practice gratitude — take time to notice what went well today, not just what went wrong. Consider keeping a gratitude journal. Know that being grateful for your blessings doesn't mean you have to discount your problems.

4. Engagement: Stay in the present.

This practice is sometimes called mindfulness. As best you can, during activities try not to be in your head with self-judgment. You may not be able to turn off the self-judgment, but you can notice it and bring yourself gently back to the present. Research shows that people with higher self-compassion also have higher self-worth or self-confidence.

5. Exercise: And, eat right too.

Doing moderate exercise about five times a week (30 minutes a pop) can dramatically help your mood. Moderate exercise is a level of activity where it is difficult to sing from your diaphragm while doing it. Also pay attention to how the type of food or drink you're eating influences your mood. You don't have to do fad diets, but anyone will be depressed if they frequently binge on carbs, junk food, and energy drinks. Remember the virtue of moderation.

6. Relationships: Focus on people who lift you up.

Interact frequently with others that bring you up (not people that bring you down). While it's OK to have some alone time, find a balance and don't isolate yourself or the depression will linger.

(Credit: intermountainhealthcare.org)



MONITOR KIDS' ONLINE HABITS

**ALTHOUGH TECHNOLOGY
CONNECTS PEOPLE, IT ALSO DISCONNECTS
PEOPLE FROM EACH OTHER**

Children are consuming more digital content than adults, and this could harm them physically, psychologically and emotionally, an international child expert has revealed. UAE-based Dr Phil McRae, executive staff officer and associate coordinator, government-research with the Alberta Teachers' Association warned families to monitor their kids' online habits to ensure they don't consume inappropriate content or fall prey to predators on the dark web.

Dr McRae, who is adjunct professor within the faculty of education at the University of Alberta, said generally, children spend more time with technology and gadgets than even their parents or families.

Dr McRae, who recently joined the UAE's Early Childhood Authority (ECA)'s Breakthrough Working Group 'Tech for Humanity' and Abu Dhabi's World Early Childhood Development Movement (WED Movement) said: "We see a spike in the use of technology in children between the age group of 10 and 11. They adapt to the use of technology and spend about four hours a day online."

The expert said that although technology connects people in social media, it was also disconnecting people from each other. "You will see many children alone together, on their devices in the playgrounds or at school compounds as a positive action of being together," said McRae. "There is need for a fine balance between the connection while using technology and the disconnection, where children are outside playing and can learn critical social and emotional skills."

He noted that it was critical to involve players in the technology industry, as well as families, researchers and educators to come together and talk about what is in the best interests of children. "Populations and industry need to come together around children and the best content that they can consume," said Dr McRae.

"With technology, it's not only the digital content that children consume, but also the context in which they consume it. Content and context are both critical—whether on the child's mobile phone, late at night in their bedrooms, and whether the content is inappropriate or dangerous for the children, or are they with their family on the couch engaging them in the digital content that can help them play together or grow together." The expert said the digital content children that consume, and where and how they consume it also matters a lot.

How long can a child stay online?

According to Dr McRae, there is no specific screen-

ing time or hours for children. "But it is good thing to balance between time spent online and offline with the children developing relationship with other children and engaging in other activities that can nurture them for socialisation in positive ways," he said.

The Canadian said technology should be looked at as nutrition or diet. "If most of the time is taken consuming something very nutritious, it might be a challenge. However, if you spend a day balancing out what your child can consume in terms of content and context, this way, we are approaching technology is a less rigid structural way, and making good decisions as parents, caregivers and educators," said Dr McRae.

He noted that when the UAE is looking at early childhood development and technology, they are trying to consider the impact on the developing mind, body and the whole child. "I think that is a critical thing to do now in a modern era because we don't have a full understating of the implications."

Dr McRae said the WED movement is trying to gather researchers, trying to consider policy in practice in the UAE around technology, humanity, screen time, better balance, is a hopeful sign.

How families can protect their children

Dr McRae says families should be involved in their children's online activities, participate with them and talk to them about what they are doing online.

"If you are participating with your children side-by-side, you may experience both the challenges and the joys that they are experiencing. It will also help you get an insight on who they are talking to, when they are talking to them, what is the content they are consuming. And it can help you guide them," said the expert. "Parents should also educate children about the online environment. Issues of trust and understanding may be different from the face-to-face environment," he said.

How youngsters can be prepared for future workforce

The expert cited three key areas that can be considered for the future.

"The first is creativity; the kind of experience and content that will encourage creativity in children is vital. Machines that will displace humans in jobs during the future will not displace creativity," said Dr McRae.

The second area is socio-emotional interaction. "We need to understand how we can engage with technologies that let us better understand humanity or let us to know each other in different parts of the world and give us deeper insight into the human condition, because machines won't do that," he explained.



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