

Jammu & Kashmir Digest

A Review of Developments in J&K



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More News and Analyses



WHITE HOTEL KATRA OPENS: Radisson Hotel Group announced last month the commencement of services at its newly-established White Hotel Katra, in the city of Katra, which is a gateway to access the Vaishno Devi shrine. — Promotional pic

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board is on the verge of completing two key projects – the Skywalk and Durga Bhawan – that will help streamline the pilgrimage at the cave shrine in the Trikuta hills of Katra.

Meanwhile, Radisson Hotel Group announced last month the commencement of services at its newly-established White Hotel Katra, in the city of Katra, which is a gateway to access the Vaishno Devi shrine. The luxurious hotel, situated mere minutes from the Vaishno Devi Katra railway station, also provides free-of-cost shuttle service to pilgrims looking to make their way to the Katra helipad and Banganga Check Post. The 196-acre property is situated within the city's scenic foothills and is 15kms from the shrine. Those looking to organise business meetings, religious ceremonies, and corporate team-building exercises can also use the theatre-style setups to accommodate 100 guests.

As regards Durga Bhawan, the four-storey building is being built at the cost of Rs 25 crores and would house 2,000 to 2,500 pilgrims. Moreover, the 10-crore Skywalk project (*yatri*-queue management project) is expected to be ready in three months. — *The Hindustan Times*, *The Economic Times*, *Business Traveller*

PILGRIMAGE SECTION

MAJOR RELIGIOUS TOURISM PROJECTS & INITIATIVES LAUNCHED

SPECIAL PILGRIM PACKAGES

The government of J&K has launched several festival-themed initiatives this year during Navratri, including Mata Ki Chauki, folk dance performances, specially curated packages to visit various sites across the union territories, 'prabhat pheris', laser shows, and multimedia exhibitions.

These measures were undertaken to increase the stay of around 43 per cent of tourists, comprised of pilgrims travelling to Amarnath and Vaishno Devi. In addition, J&K Tourism Department also collaborated with various tour operators to provide visitors with "special short packages". Meanwhile, Welcome Hotel at Katra was awarded the 'Best Family Holiday' destination by Hospitality India Annual International Travel Awards (HIAITA). — *The Hindu*, *Daily Excelsior*



Chief Postmaster General (Jammu and Kashmir Circle) Niraj Kumar inaugurating Shikara Post service in Srinagar on 9 October, 2022.

**DEVELOPMENT
SECTION**

**SPOT YOUR
POSTMAN
PADDLING ON
A SHIKARA**

MESSAGE IN BOTTLE? TRY BOAT!

On 9 October 2022, Mr. Niraj Kumar, the Chief Postmaster General for the J&K Circle, marked the first day of the national postal week by inaugurating the Shikara Post Service on Dal Lake. Several traders, local residents, and houseboat owners attended the inaugural event.

This is believed to be a “first-of-its-kind service” in this area, primarily aimed at benefitting local traders dealing with tourists regularly, elderly people who cannot access the post office, and those residing on the famous houseboats.

This initiative will ensure that people living in areas in proximity to the lake, specifically the interiors, will have equitable ease to postal services, including, but not limited to, booking their parcels, essentially brought to their front doors.

Mr. Kumar believes this step will facilitate the local population’s economic empowerment and cater to the specialised needs of Kashmir’s diverse demographic.

He also added that his department, the Department of Posts, has adopted “Kashmir ka sona, kona kona” as its slogan to advertise local products to the various corners of the country by relying on its extensive network. – *The Logical Indian, The Economic Times*



The new Shikara Post Service (see pic above) will bolster services of the world’s only Floating Post Office (see picture below), which was started on the Dal Lake in the British era over 200 years ago.





Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha inaugurated “Jashn-e-Kashmir” under the theme ‘New Kashmir New Hope’, a three-week long cultural festival celebrating tradition, culture and heritage, at Srinagar. — Pic from *Amar Ujala*

On 25 October 2022, J&K’s Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Manoj Sinha, inaugurated a three-week cultural event to celebrate local traditions, heritage, and culture, called “Jashn-e-Kashmir – New Kashmir New Hope.” The Office of Divisional Commissioner (Kashmir), All J&K Folk Artists Association, J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, and Shah Qalander Folk Theatre have collectively organised these festivities.

Celebrating the launch of this event, Lt. Gov. Sinha proclaimed, “Our unique diversity is our pride and our biggest strength. Such festivals will encourage artistes, artisans, and craftsmen to promote the spirit of Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat. After a long pause, we are witnessing cultural revival in J&K. Several schemes for promoting folk arts, literature, and visual arts have been prepared to give a new impetus to art and culture.”

This local administration sees this initiative as a critical aspect of its roadmap, necessary for sustaining and reinvigorating local traditions and culture.

The affiliated actors, including Mr. Gulzar Ahmad Bhat, All J&K Folk Artists Association’s Chairman, expressed his profound gratitude to the government for undertaking this initiative. – *THE PRINT, CROSS TOWN NEWS*

CULTURE SECTION

3-WEEK-LONG FESTIVAL CELEBRATES CULTURE OF KASHMIR

‘NEW KASHMIR NEW HOPE’ THEME



FILM FESTIVAL SHOWCASES
SCALE OF LOCAL TALENT

Vomedh, a theatre and cultural group operating out of Jammu, organised the International Film Festival of Srinagar from 29 to 30 October 2022 at Tagore Hall.

Besides local and international movies and documentaries, the attendees also enjoyed the cultural events on the festival’s sidelines.

A total of 14 out of 30 films showcased to the public demonstrated the scale and depth of the local talent. – *GREATER KASHMIR*