

Snow-filled meadows of Bhadarwah attracting tourists in large numbers, boosts local economy

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

BHADARWAH: The local economy in Bhadarwah which was experiencing continuous slump since COVID Pandemic has suddenly received a much required boost as visitors are converging in large numbers to experience the mundane beauty of snow filled meadows and peaks.

The May snowfall which has resulted in spreading a white carpet of otherwise green meadows during this period of the year have brought the Guldanda meadow and Chattergalla pass - at an altitude of 9,555 and 10,400 feet simultaneously- to life with the place brimming with visitors.

The twin meadows which of late have emerged as darling of tourists-located 35 km north-east of Bhadarwah town on Bhadarwah-Pathankot national highway have given all tourist stake holders including small time vendors, cab operators, hoteliers and guesthouse owners a reason to smile as the flow of visitors has given a much needed shot in the arm to the tourism industry.

On one hand tourists from different states are beaming with joy and happiness while experiencing the beauty



Tourists enjoying at snow-filled meadows at Bhadarwah. (Pic by Raja Rehber Jamal)

of white snow and chill that too in mid May when plains from where they come from having grueling heat wave, while on the otherhand locals are attributing the inflow of visitors to the far off virgin locations to the vision of Prime Minister.

Santosh Jangam, a tourist from Mumbai said that we came to pay obeisance at Mata Vaishno Devi Katra and thereafter our plan was to go to Kashmir but the tour operator suggested us to visit Bhadarwah as Jammu-Srinagar highway was

closed. We decided to give it a try and believe me the tour of this beautiful valley is worth every penny.

"It's like a dream come true as we are playing with snow in Mid May, when our place is under intense heat wave. The vast meadows give an impression of being covered with white carpet surrounded with snow peaked mountains. It's mesmerising and magical, We are fortunate and lucky to be here at Guldanda," said Santosh (45) another visitor from Mumbai.

"Tourist inflow has given us a new lease of life as the Govt jobs have dried up and there are very fewer business opportunities but the sudden inflow of tourists has saved us from bankruptcy and since last month we are doing good business at Guldanda," said Mohd Yusuf Wani (37) a local tea vendor at Guldanda.

"Last few months were one of the best for the tourism industry as the Bhaderwah Valley witnessed a record number of tourist arrivals during this season," said Vishesh Paul Mahajan, DC Doda Guldanda, Chattergalla and Padri especially in winter, have been emerged as most popular among the many places on Jammu's tourist map. Tourist arrivals have spiked after the recent snowfall," DC added saying, "We have an average of around 9,00 tourist arrivals here daily."

Most of the hotels are fully occupied or booked, he added.

Mesmerised by the beauty of the resort, many tourists want to return.

Historic Mounгри Mela concludes; over 30,000 devotees visited annual event

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UDHAMPUR: A large number of People from different faiths visited 3- day historic Shiv-Parvati Mounгри Mela at Sar Dabar in tehsil Mounгри of district Udhampur; which concluded today amid traditional fervor and gaiety.

As per the organisers, around thirty thousand devotees attended the 3-days mela this year.

On concluding day, Deputy Commissioner, Udhampur Sachin Kumar Vaishya was the chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest appreciated the organizers for holding such types of local fairs in far flung areas of the District. He said that such fairs are a symbol of 'our diverse culture and these not only attract tourists but also help in the socio-economic development of the area. Hailing sports events organised during the Mela, the DC said that sports



DC Udhampur Sachin Kumar during concluding day of Mela.

play a pivotal role in the overall personality development of the youth, besides channelizing their energies in the right perspective. He hailed the Youth Services and Sports Department for organising rural sports competitions and cultural programmes by involving youth of different institutions of the area.

On concluding day, the Department of Information and Public Relations, Cultural Wing Jammu in collaboration with District Information Centre Udhampur presented scintillating cultural performances

along with cultural troupes drawn from different educational institutions. The Artists presented folklore, dances and cultural programmes depicting the tradition of the areas which was highly appreciated by the General public of the area.

For the successful conduct of the three-day mela, the district administration Udhampur had made elaborate arrangements of security, drinking water and power supply, Medicare, traffic regulation, additional bus services and stock of commodities etc.

Rajouri Admn develops "Azaala" mobile app for receiving & resolving public grievances



DC Rajouri, Vikas Kundal launching app.

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RAJOURI: The District Administration of Rajouri has developed an innovative mobile app called "Azaala" for receiving and resolving public grievances. The app serves as a one-stop solution for citizens to register their complaints and grievances easily. It can be installed from the Google Play Store, and users can lodge

complaints through various channels such as WhatsApp, email, Twitter, or Facebook. The app also provides an option for OTP verification to ensure secure and reliable complaint registration.

Complaints received through WhatsApp, Twitter, or Facebook are directly accessed by the Nodal Officer, who promptly forwards them to

the concerned officer for resolution. The Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar, conducted a demonstration during the launch and appreciated the initiative, advising the Deputy Commissioner to regularly review the app's performance, grievances received, redressed, and feedback.

The Azaala App aims to promote transparency and accountability in government functioning, enhancing citizen satisfaction. Additionally, the district administration of Rajouri has started a phone-in program to listen to public grievances. The use of technology in the app and other initiatives aims to provide an improved grievance redressal mechanism in the district.

Shahnawaz inaugurates Barayan to Madan Chawana Road

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SURANKOTE : JKPCC General Secretary and DDC Member from Surankote A block Shahnawaz Choudhary on Wednesday inaugurated 4KM road approved under NABARD (cost 7. 5 crores) from Barayan to Madan Chawana via Chhambher Road in Sanai Upper Panchayat in presence of AEE R&B Shafiq Chouhan, AE, JE, other department officials, PRIIs and local dignitaries of the area.

Hundreds of people of the area thronged, distributed sweets and garlanded Shahnawaz Choudhary to thank him for fulfilling long pending demand of the area from last 60 years.



DDC Member Shahnawaz Choudhary inaugurating road.

Speaking on the occasion Shahnawaz Choudhary said that this far flung area was completely ignored and people used to travel by foot for hours 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 2 years, particularly the road projects to connect the far flung areas with road network.

Weekly Block Diwas: DC Kathua visits Billawar, chairs Public Outreach programme

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KATHUA: As part of weekly Block Diwas initiative of the UT government, Deputy Commissioner, (DC) Kathua, Rakesh Minhas presided over a Public Outreach Programme here in the premises of PWD Rest House Billawar .

DDC Chairperson Billawar, Ashok Kumar; President Billawar MC, Umakant Basotra; DDC Member Billawar, DDC Member Nagrota Gujroo, DDC Member Mandli, ADC Billawar Vinay Khosla;

Chief Planning Officer, Uttam Singh and other district officers and officials, besides a large number of people attended the programme.

The programme witnessed scores of individuals and deputations including PRI members projecting demands and informing the DC about the problems being faced by the inhabitants of their respective areas.

The people submitted a memorandum of demands seeking the resolution of



DC Kathua, Rakesh Minhas chairing public meeting.

issues including better road connectivity, drinking water supply, meeting shortage of staff in the Education and Health department, besides other amenities.

Listening patiently to the demands of people, the DC passed on the spot instructions to the concerned departments for time bound redress of all the issues.

The DC said the motive behind these outreach pro-

grammes was to get first hand appraisal of the problems and development needs of the people and work out the mechanism to address them in a time bound manner. He assured people that the projected issues will be looked into and efforts will be made to redress them on priority basis.

Regarding the issue of shortage of staff in health institutions and government schools, the DC assured to explore the possibility of rationalization of staff to meet the needs of far off areas.

On the issue of more play-

grounds in rural periphery, the DC directed ADC Billawar to identify suitable lands to utilize the same for sports activities. He also asked to develop recreational facilities for the youngsters.

The DC assured that the issue of poor mobile phone connectivity would be flagged at appropriate level to provide relief to the uncovered pockets of the district.

Taking serious view of delay on the part of the contractor to hand over the new building of CHC Billawar, the DC directed the CMO to take up the matter on priori-

ty and shift the gynecology section to the new building. Responding to the demand of early repair of defunct handpumps, the DC asked the concerned officer to submit a detailed report and start the restoration work at the earliest. He directed ADC Billawar to ensure alternate means like tanker supply to provide potable water to water deficit areas. Later, the DC inspected the stalls set up by different departments exhibiting their schemes and programmes. Similarly, Block Diwas program was also held at Basohli sub division.

The first of its kind call centre at district level will run round the clock in synergy with the centralized call center at Jammu.

Livestock rearers or animal owners, especially the farmers of far flung and inaccessible areas including dairy farmers whose units were established under IDDS are free to call the helpline number 1962 for availing doorstep veterinary services particularly of emergency nature.

On the occasion, farmers appreciated the efforts of the Department of Animal Husbandry Ramban in fulfilling the long pending public demand.

SSP Samba chairs security review meeting



SSP Samba Benam Tosh chairing meeting.

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SAMBA: Senior Superintendent of Police Samba Benam Tosh on Wednesday chaired security review meeting at District Police Headquarters Samba which was attended by the officers of Army, BSF, CRPF, ITBP, CISE, IB, CID, DSB, Addl. SP Samba, all SDPOs, all I/C PPs, all I/C BPPs & other sister agencies to discuss the security preparedness ahead of G20 summit 2023.

At the outset, SSP Samba shared the inputs & directions received from higher-ups with the officers present at the security meet and requested them for value addition, if any. The officers of all forces concerned with the security

and maintenance of law & order presented briefings suggesting measures to further strengthen security grid. The participant officers apprised the meeting about the current security scenario in their respective areas of responsibility. All the security related issues emerging in the district were discussed at length and inputs, suggestions and lines of action were shared.

SSP Samba requested the participant officers to mobilize all available manpower & resources to ensure that no untoward incident takes place in their areas of respon-

sibility before, during or immediately after G20 Summit 2023. Nefarious designs of anti-national elements & anti-social elements be quickly responded with befitting reply, the SSP advised. SSP Samba directed all the SHO's and Supervisory Officers to conduct the verification of all hotels, restaurants, other lodgements, immigrating, emigrating persons, tenants and outsider labourers working near IB on priority. They were further directed to organize special nakas on lateral roads and strengthen existing nakas on NHW as well as on border roads besides establishing joint nakas at selected places in view of present security scenario. SSP Samba laid stress on ensuring exemplary coordination, smooth flow of information and ground work in tandem so as to prevent untoward incident.

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REASI: Celebrating the India's G20 Presidency in 2023, A blood donation camp was organized at Govt. General Zorawar Singh Memorial Degree College Reasi, by College NCORD Committee, Sports Committee, NCC Unit, Health & Red Cross Club in collaboration with J&K Thalassaemia Welfare Society for children affected with Thalassaemia with the guidance and supervision of the worthy Principal of the College, Dr. Kulvinder Kour.

Shashi Sharma, Director Sports/Convener Health Club at GDC Reasi welcomed the team of doctors/Health professionals from Jammu, Volunteers from J&K Thalassaemia Welfare Society, Red Cross Society Reasi, NCC Cadets of the College, Volunteers from Sports depart-



Faculty along with students during the camp.

ment, NSS Volunteers and other student volunteers for their unwavering support in organizing this noble event in the service of mankind. Prof. Gourav Gupta, Asstt. Professor Biotechnology and Nodal Officer College NCORD Committee made the students aware about thalassaemia. He encouraged the students to participate with vigor in such events and stay away from Drugs and be an asset to the

society. Lt. Prof. Sunil Mangotra (NCC officer)/Convener Red Cross Club of the college led by example and was the first person among the blood donors. Prof. Mukesh Kumar and Prof. Rajinder Kumar also donated their blood towards this noble cause.

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They inspired the students to come forward and donate blood. Around 75 students/teachers registered themselves as voluntary donors with the College registration committee, out of which around 40 students/teachers were found suitable to donate blood by the doctor. All the preparations for the Camp were made with assistance from J&K Thalassaemia Welfare Society, Red Cross Society Reasi, Canara Bank Reasi, District Hospital Reasi. Refreshment was served to all the donors/participants and organizers of the Camp. Prof. Anchal Raj, Associate Professor at GDC Reasi was present in the event. The team

of health professionals from GMC Jammu were led by Dr. Mohsin Farooque. Kuldeep Khajuria, District Executive Secretary, District Red Cross Society was present throughout the camp to provide all necessary assistance. Nishant Gupta (Manager) and Anubhav Sharma (Assistant Manager) were present as representatives from Canara Bank Reasi. Prof. Sunil Mangotra gave the formal vote of thanks in which he appreciated the efforts of J&K Thalassaemia Welfare Society, Doctors, Health Professionals, Red Cross Society Reasi, CMO Reasi, Canara Bank and Media persons in making this event a success.

Jal Jeevan Mission: DDC Rajouri, DDC Member Seri lay foundation stone of Water Supply Scheme

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RAJOURI: District Development Commissioner Rajouri, Vikas Kundal along with DDC Member Seri, Sangeta Sharma on Wednesday 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.

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POONCH: In a meeting of Congress workers at District Poonch on Wednesday, Gurjeet Singh has been unanimously nominated as the District Chairman of JKPCC Minority Department District Poonch in presence of Rajinder Singh Chairman Minority Department. On this occasion many prominent citizens including Anmol



Congress leaders and workers during the programme.

Singh (President Shri Society Poonch) , Balber Guru Ram Das Sewa Singh General Secretary

of the Society), Onkar Singh President Gurudwara Sahib Purani Poonch, Mohd. Ali Khan, Mohd Shabir Ahmed, Javed Iqbal , Sarabjeet Singh Kranti, Amarjeet Singh Headmaster Rtd., Dr. S.S Khajuria, Gurmeet Singh, Jatinder Singh, Balwinder Singh Baghi, Bhupinder Singh Oberoi, Prithpal Singh Ghai and others were present.