

FIRST-OF-ITS-KIND SPACE LAB IN KISHTWAR'S GOVT SCHOOL

A space lab, first-of-its-kind in Jammu and Kashmir, was inaugurated in a government school in Kishtwar district, an official spokesperson said, describing it as a "historic moment" for the Union Territory. The pioneering space lab, developed under the ISRO space tutor programme by Vyomika Space Academy and funded by the Directorate of Education Jammu, represents a significant leap in educational technology, the spokesman said. He said the lab is equipped with high-tech telescopes, ISRO rocket and satellite demonstration models, drones and aircrafts. "This will enable students to explore the wonders of the cosmos and notable space missions from ISRO," the spokesman said in a statement here. He said the unveiling ceremony took place at Government Higher Secondary School Boys, Kishtwar in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar, Devansh Yadav and Chief Education Officer, Kishtwar Prehlad Bhagat. Students and staff of the school were also in attendance to witness this landmark cosmic event, the spokesman said. He said Vyomika Space Academy Chief Executive Officer Govind Yadav briefed the gathering about detailed insights into the lab's functionality and its potential to inspire and enhance students' knowledge of space, science and technology. Students from class 6 to 12 will have the opportunity to receive skill development training sessions from these cutting-edge labs, the spokesman said, adding Vyomika Space Academy will host a state-level inter-school hydro rocket and astronomy workshop on October 15, in commemoration of the birth anniversary of former president A P J Abdul Kalam.

Captivating Chinta Valley

The Chinta Valley in Bhadarwah is located about 200 kms away from Jammu having an altitude around 3000 mts from mean sea level (MSL). It is kaleidoscopically a picturesque spot perched amidst the surrounding hills to north east of Bhadarwah town itself. The serene and scenic beauty of Bhadarwah and its surroundings are equalizing the vale of Kashmir, a paradise on earth. Bhadarwah as well is nomenclaturised aschhota Kashmir in so far as its beauty, climate and culture is concerned.

The valley is bounded by the ends of spurs from the ridges of forests specked by cultivable land at their different levels. The bottom of this valley is flat and at certain points sloopy. The terraced lands are thickly studded with small and big villages covered by grand black deodars, kail, Chir, fur and spruce at higher altitude. And still at higher elevation are vast carpet-like meadows covered with green grass and multihued, multi-colored flowers, herbs, shrubs of mutimedical uses.

Literally speaking, Chinta Valley has an ancient name chintan, a sansrit word meaning self-introspection but with rolling wheel of time the word chintan depraived into chinta. The enchanting Valley of Chinta falls around 18 to 20 kms away from the Bhadarwah town itself. From Bhadarwah, the road passes through various villages shrouded by thickly coniferous forests areas. The valley depicts multihued social and cultural heritage akin to neighboring Himachal Pradesh, UP and other Himalayan states of India.

The higher elevation abounds in multihued hills having specks of tourists spots vizsuvardhar, rowdal, fukklandhar, loirudhar with grassy meadows and towering pine trees which give pleasant whiffs and hum in gentle breeze far to distant apart. And a head about 5 kms to 8 kms on foot, the spot gives panoramic view of varied venues of solace and marry making all around the Chinta Valley and down below Bhadarwah town as if one is airily viewing the enchanting scenario far away of what we see Chita Valley.

Towards the east of Chinta valley is another Charming and enchanting Valley by name Jai surrounded by thick and dark Deodars, Kail and chir forests which of course are connected by Kacha and pacca inter-linkages facilitating varied avenues for picnics, riding, climbing and fishing in small rivulets of Jai. Climatitically Speaking, the valley is tamperate particularly during summer thus providing a comfortable and pleasant resting place for the tourists and other visitors like.

Economically, the area is congenitally sound despite the fact that agriculture is the main stay of the people. The local are also involved in government and other jobs owing to high literacy. The locals are most hospital, peace loving and of jovial nature, always espousing religious cause, tolerance and fraternity insofar as religious faith is concerned, the Naga cult is the prominent creed and features of the vicinity. One of the most prominent pilgrimage is to Kailash (Kaplash) kund and abode of Vasukai Nag raja which begins every year in the month of Bhadaron August on 12th day of krishnapaksh. The yatra starts from Vasukai Nag temple ghata just at the entrance of Bhadarwah town.

The pilgrimage takes the same traditional route which was taken by shriVasukai Nag ji to reach KailashKund at the time when Garudji wanted to kill Vasukhi Nag ji. Instead of having a fight with garudji, shreeVasukhi Nag ji ran away to avoid fight in order to obey the promise he had made to his mother Vanita as both Gaud Ji and Vasukhi Nag ji were the sons of great saint Maharishi Kashyap. Kailash in Bhadarwah is also called kablas. It is a big lake situated at a height arrounding 15k feet from (Mean Seal Level)msl. The lake is beautiful, pure having crystal clear water which is icy cold. The lake is surrounding by high mountains and glaciers. It is most attractive and enthralling spot which had been the abode of Lord Shiva who provided shelter to Vasukhi Nag ji when he was being chased by Garudji. Lord Shiva after handing over KailashKund to VasukhiJiproceeded Manimahesh in HP.

There are two other holy shrines atop Chinta Jai. Sheshnag (Sabarmag) at sabardhar and other Tara Bhuja at Roshira at a distance of 3 kms to 5 kms and are located midst of forests of Chinta Valley.It is believed that both the scared shines are oldest in Bharawah.

There are multihued sared spots vizgupt Ganga adjoining Neeru rivulet where there is a temple of Lord Shive with huge Shiv lingam and parnali of water keeps of soothing Shivlingam since the existence of this temple. The Shivlingam is reported to have been brought from Manchester, NeeruNala.

To propitiate the local diets, lot of faresand festivals are celebrated in the month August and September when it is a slack in Bhadarwah to prominent colorful dances/Melasare most prominent. Dhaku dance and pattMela are most revertially celebrated in Bharadarwah Valley. Now that the government has proclaimed a Tourists development Authority of bhadarwah and with the passage of time, this shall boost the tourist potential of the area for multihued development activities to attract and enchant tourists from India and abroad to have a charming glimpse of beauty, cultural heritage and above all the serene, scenic beauty of the area and its surrounds apart from invigorating local economy- the clarion call of the day.

(The author is former Conservator of Forests J&K).

World Tourism Day: Celebrating the beauty of global exploration

RITU AGARWAL

Ever since 1980, World Tourism Day is celebrated annually across the world on September 27. It was on this day in 1970 when the Statutes of the United Nations World Tourism Organization were adopted which are considered a milestone in world tourism.

This paved the way for the establishment of UNWTO five years later. UNWTO celebrated the first World Tourism Day as an international observance on September 27, 1980.

The timing of World Tourism Day is particularly appropriate as it comes at the end of high season in northern hemisphere and the beginning of the season in southern hemisphere.

This day aims to promote and raise awareness about the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political, and economic values. It also serves as an opportunity to reflect on the incredible diversity of our planet, the beauty of its landscapes, and the rich tapestry of cultures that make up our global community.

Tourism is a vital industry that contributes significantly to the world economy. It generates income, creates jobs, and stimulates local economies. Beyond economic benefits, tourism fosters cultural exchange, promotes understanding between nations, and preserves cultural and natural heritage sites. One of the most beautiful aspects of World Tourism Day is celebrating the incredible diversity of our world. From the snow-covered peaks of the Himalayas to the lush rainforests of the Amazon, our planet offers a breath taking array of natural wonders. Each destination has its unique charm, offering a glimpse into the beauty of nature and the marvels of human architecture and history.

Traveling exposes us to different cultures, traditions, and ways of life. It allows us to break down stereotypes, challenge biases, and promote tolerance and understanding. When we visit a foreign country, we have the opportunity to connect with locals, taste their cuisine, and learn about their customs. This cultural exchange enriches our lives and fosters a sense



of global unity.

World Tourism Day also underscores the importance of preserving our cultural and natural heritage. Tourists are often drawn to historical sites, museums, and natural wonders, which, in turn, encourages governments and communities to protect and maintain these treasures. Sustainable tourism practices are essential to ensure that future generations can also enjoy these remarkable places.

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on sustainable tourism. Travellers are increasingly conscious of their impact on the environment and local communities. Sustainable tourism encourages responsible travel practices that minimize harm to the environment, respect local cultures, and benefit the host communities. This approach ensures that tourism continues to be a force for good in the world.

This World Tourism Day 2023, the UNWTO, under the theme "Tourism and green investment" highlights the need for more and better-targeted investments for the sustainable development goals, the UN roadmap for a better world by 2030. For World Tourism Day 2023, UNWTO highlights the need for more and better-targeted investments for people, for planet, for prosperity.

This World Tourism Day, governments and organizations worldwide are taking concrete steps to mitigate various challenges faced by tourism industry.

An increasing number of hotels and resorts are adopting eco-friendly practices, from energy-efficient designs to waste reduction initiatives. Guests are encouraged to participate in sustainable practices, such as reusing towels and conserving water.

Empowering local communities is a central tenet of sustainable tourism. Initiatives that involve indigenous populations in tourism activities not only provide economic benefits but also preserve cultural heritage.

Airlines and travel agencies are promoting carbon offset programs, allowing travellers to mitigate the environmental impact of their flights by investing in carbon reduction projects.

The harmful effects of irresponsible wildlife tourism have come under the spotlight. Efforts to protect animals and their habitats while educating tourists about their role in conservation are on the rise.

Technology is playing a pivotal role in promoting sustainable tourism. Apps and websites provide travellers with information on eco-friendly options, public transportation, and responsible tour operators. While significant strides have been made in promoting sustainable tourism, challenges persist. The tourism industry must find a balance between economic growth and environmental conservation. Over-tourism in popular destinations remains a concern, requiring destination management strategies to ensure a positive experience for both visitors and residents.

Tourism and Cultural Heritage

DR. BANARSI LAL

Tourism is widely recognized as one of the most progressive industries that helps for the global sustainable development. It is known for its tangible outcomes. As tourism grows it contributes in social development, economic development, environmental sustainability and inclusive development. Environment, culture and heritage are considered as the most significant factors that attracts the tourists. Tourism is continuously growing across the globe because of its various attractive and new destinations for the tourists. It is termed as an instrument for employment generation, poverty eradication and sustainable human development. Tourism affects economic, cultural, social and political values of a country. Tourism is helpful in creating social awareness, modernization, infrastructure, revival and discovery of rich traditions of art and craft, improvement of health, strengthen social integration and social ties. It has emerged as one of the world's largest service industries with sizable economic benefits. With the emergence of e-commerce, innovations and technological advancements, demographic changes and the de-regulation of airline industry, the travel and tourism is spontaneously contributing to improve Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and creation of jobs across the world economy. This has led to the improvement of other related industries especially transportation, construction, retail etc. World tourism is the world's largest employer. This booming tourism industry is emerging as an important driver of growth and prosperity, employment generator, supports to enhance the national income and improves the balance of payments. India's tourism industry is experiencing a strong period of growth in high spending foreign tourists and coordinated government campaigns to promote 'Incredible India'. Promotion of agri-tourism needs conceptual convergence with rural tourism, eco-tourism, health tourism, adventure tourism and culinary adventure. Present concept of travel and tourism is limited to urban and rich class which constitutes only a small portion of the population. However, the concept of rural tourism takes travel and tourism to the larger population, widening the scope of tourism. Rural tourism is considered as the fastest growing

sector in the tourism industry.

Tourism is a highly competitive business. Success in tourism can be influenced by the weather, changing consumer taste, economic cycles and government policies. Rural tourism has a great appeal for many rural communities because of anticipated economic benefits such as increased income and employment. There is a greater need for intensive rural tourism planning. Tourism in rural areas can change the rural economy. Rural tourism can earn the money from the urban areas of the country and globally. The importance of rural tourism as contributor to economic growth of rural areas has been accepted in recent years. The flow of money earned by rural tourism will find its way into overall rural economy through the multiplier effect. Rural tourism helps to enhance the national income. Both domestic and international tourism have the equal advantage to enhance the national income as both types of tourism constitute a demand for service and for consumer goods that would otherwise not have been produced. The accommodation construction, increased tourist transport and equipment etc. are the examples of how tourists demand encourages investment. Tourism provides employment many times more than normal manufacturing industries. Many business firms such as restaurants, travel agents, gift shops, transporters etc. earn income from tourism activities. Several other firms such as food and beverages suppliers, photographers, taxi drivers' doctors, dentists etc. also get benefit from tourism related activities. Rural tourism thus can create lot of employment in rural areas. It can also help in increasing the agricultural productivity as it draws manpower from hidden employment or seasonal under-employment. Tourism is an invisible export. It is different from other sectors of industry. The tourism industry can earn a huge amount of foreign money. Tourism is thus a source of aid from developed countries to the developing and underdeveloped countries. Rural tourism is directly helpful in correcting India's adverse balance of payment position. Through tourism government can gain more economic profits from taxes on things tourists use and buy.

Tourism is a socio-cultural event for tourists. Through tourism the person gets the opportunity to see different areas of the

world and observe different cultures and way of life. Tourists are a major factor of socio-cultural change. Tourism has many advantages. It enhances communication with the people, improves self image of the community, increases employment opportunities, improves educational opportunities, motivates for learning new things etc. Indian economy is a developing economy. The growth of new employment opportunities is lesser than population growth. At the time of independence, the Indian economy was having almost all characteristics of underdeveloped economy. Indian economy is an agricultural economy, as around 70 per cent of the country's population gets employment in agriculture. Most of the agricultural workers find only seasonal employment. At that time they try to find employment in local or nearby areas. A need has been felt to extend the tourism development in rural areas. Countries like the Singapore, Malaysia, United States, Costa Rica, Kenya, Canada etc. tap their natural beauties in the form of nature based projects. The local beautiful areas are managed by the local community which helps in the upliftment of socio-economic status of the rural people. Tourism is also a major foreign exchange earner.

Rural tourism is very fascinating for the domestic and foreign tourists as villages have their unique styles and splendid natural beauty. Rural tourism refers the tourists' interest in the customs of the indigenous and exotic people. Rural tourism is a different from general tourism which focuses on the local people. Union Territory of J&K has a great rural tourism potential, due to its unique heritage, culture and natural attractions. Rural tourism is a new concept which covers all those aspects of travel whereby people can reciprocate their cultures and traditions. In rural tourism, tourists visit the homes of villagers to understand their customs, traditions, life style, food habits, their festivals, folk dances, songs, rituals etc. It also involves a study, research and purchase of local products. The villages could be the centers of attraction for the people of urban areas who live in the congested and polluted cities. Such people want to get away from their daily routine work and enjoy the rural areas during weekends and holidays.

India is blessed with its diverse culture and

known for its rich historical-cultural background. Its unique natural attractiveness and geographical features makes visitors to have glimpse of the whole world here. Cultural tourism is a type of tourism that enables visitors to take part in local cultural celebrations such as festivals and traditions. It is a significant development engine as it can boost local economies. The visitors thus can have cultural contact with the people. Rural tourism is participatory and designed to improve the economic and social well-being of local people. It also points the need for careful planning to project the integrity of sites and minimum harmful impacts. Local community needs to plan ahead to ensure that rural tourism sustains and benefits local community socio-culturally and economically and is not simply gaining the money for government or private entrepreneurs. If we want to commercialize the rural tourism, we need to endeavor to satisfy its obligations towards local villagers. Under rural tourism certain aspects such as fresh and non-polluting environment, traditions, village handcraft, village folk dance and music, painting and sculpture, history of the region, nature of local work and technology use, agriculture, horticulture, architecture, education system, religion, dress, leisure activities etc. can attract tourists from different places. Rural tourism creates new employment opportunities in the rural areas, attracts many youths for rural employment and reduces the rural migration towards the urban areas. New jobs in the rural areas may motivate the rural people for education. Employment opportunities in rural tourism can draw workers from other sectors of economy. Domestic jobs may not only improve the status of the rural people but can also increase the income of rural people. Rural tourism may also revive the local people's interest and pride in their culture, traditions and values. The influence of mass media and hegemonic culture can push the local folk traditions into oblivion. Rural tourism can also provide the opportunities to study the religious and ritualistic services. These aspects of a culture can fascinate the strangers. Religious rituals, festivals and public performances can provide inputs to symbolic qualities of rural tourism.

(The author is Sr. Scientist & Head of KVK, Reasi (SKUAST-J).

YOUR COLUMN EFFICACY OF BANDH

Dear Editor,

Bandh is organized as a token of expression of anger against the policies of government. Bandh is a self-destruction act. There are many occasions in the past that the bandhs started with silence have ended with violence. Silent bandhs have also telling effect on the economy of the state or nation. Violent bandhs would not only play destructive role on economy front but also leave the day with stains of blood and destruction of public property. It is easy for government to be blind and deaf for silent bandh. It is God-sent opportunity for the ruling parties to round up the people involved in the organization of bandh if it turns violent.

Several Kannada outfits have called for bandh on September 26 and 29 in protest against the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) asking Karnataka to release 15000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu for 15 days. The Supreme Court has endorsed the decision of the CWMA and asked the Karnataka government to obey the order. The interest of Karnataka farmers has been ignored. Government is caught in the hands of court orders on the one hand and striking people on the other. This is a sense of de javu. Not new for now. The Cauvery water war raises its head whenever the rain plays truant. Refusal of the Supreme Court to intervene in the matter is shocking. Congress in the nation as a whole and DMK in Tamil Nadu are parts of I.N.D.I.A. Congress can be in no mood to hurt the D.M.K. When the matter has been adjudicated by the CWMA and the Supreme Court has declined to intervene,

the suggestion of B-JP for the Congress to persuade Sonia Gandhi to initiate talks with Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Stalin and the suggestion of Congress for the BJP to persuade the Prime Minister to intervene in the matter serves no purpose. Because the DMK is not under the control of Congress. Beyond this, DMK is the political opponent of the BJP. If Sonia suggests something to Stalin, Stalin may politely say 'no' and if Modi suggests something, he may sternly say 'no'. Results are no different in both the situations. It is easy for the Congress to ask all the Lok Sabha MPs to resign because it has only one MP from its party. 25 of the 28 MPs are from BJP. Even if all the 25 MPs resign, the government at centre cannot be dislodged. If the Chief Minister of Karnataka resigns and no one comes forward to head the government, the centre has the power to impose President's rule in such a situation on the ground that the government cannot be run on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. The central government obeys the order of the Court or CWMA. In no case, the release of water can be avoided. If the people in Karnataka have come to street on the Cauvery water issue, the top court must open its eyes and see the plight of people in Karnataka and deliver its verdict acceptable to both the states. Reduced quantum of water ordered for release by 50 per cent can placate the anger of the ryots of Karnataka. Top court can only do something to de-escalate the tension on Cauvery water release.

K.V. Seetharamaiah

Mayor's abhiyan to weed out corruption

Dear Editor,

My joy knew no bounds when I learnt about the resolve of Jammu mayor to start a campaign against corruption deep

rooted in the soil of Jammu and Kashmir UT. Really it is a very noble cause which can help redeem the people from this contagious disease. We appreciate Mr. Mayor in his sincere endeavour of weeding out corruption from J&K UT and ensure him about our fullest co operation in this noble cause. But, sir to detect the corrupt and the corruption is like detecting a fish drinking water inside the reservoir: It has got deep roots in the soil of Jammu and Kashmir and has dissolved in the blood. Every person with an ounce of brain knows, how, in spite of the much hyped claims about the implementation of digitisation of records in all the govt. offices one can neither get neither any document nor its copy, having paid proper fee for that, without greasing the palm of the person bound to issue the same as a part of his duty. Even the compensations or any other amount is not transferred to the account of the beneficiary unless he pays a fixed percent of the amount in advance. For e stamps hundreds of rupees are charged over and above the face value. The findings will startle us when we find the black sheepskin camouflage in our own houses. The palacious house of bureaucrats, politicians and even of the average government servants in the posh colonies of the capital cities of UT and the big towns reveal how much these so called public representatives and public servants have looted the coffers of the state and the UT. If their present assets are compared with the one they had at the time they entered the public and political institutions we find heaven's difference. There is one wise sayings A single swallow can not make summer but for the concerted efforts of all the persons at the helm of affairs one can not eradicate this epidemic gone deep into the soils of the nation. We the people of the UT pledge to co operate you and pray to god for your success in this Herculean job.

Shiv Kumar Padha Basohli.