

# Jammu & Kashmir Update



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## Lamayuru Monastery



The Lamayuru Monastery in Ladakh is located at a distance of 120 km from Leh, and is believed to be the oldest in the area. It provides an insight into the region's culture through its ancient paintings and murals.

Built in the 11th century, the monastery attracts both visitors and Buddhist scholars.

It is associated with the Red Hat Sect of Buddhism and is home to around 150 Buddhist monks.

The monastery is a complex of buildings with shrines dedicated to different gods and incarnations of Lord Buddha. It has a magnificent collection of wall paintings.

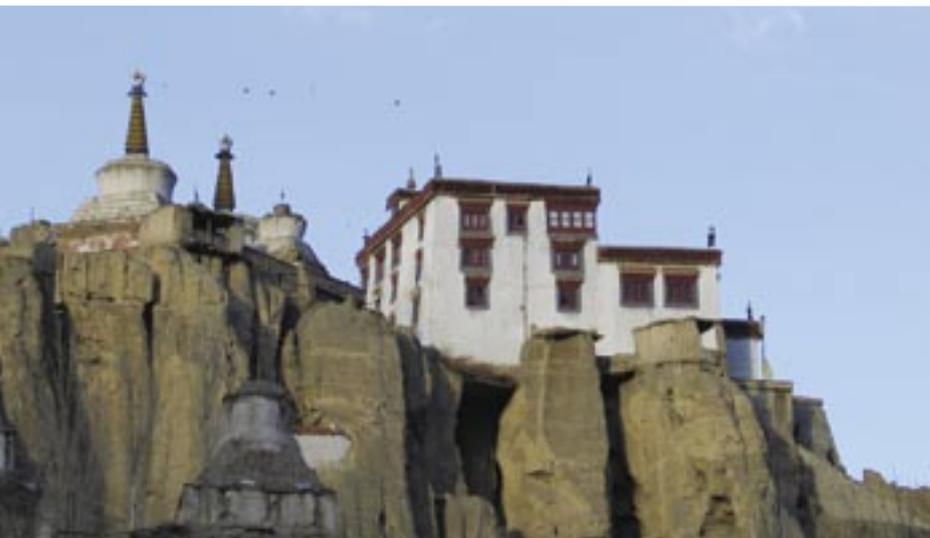
It also houses a cave, where an 11th century Buddhist scholar meditated for years.

"There was a temple here, which was demolished by the Dogras when they invaded the region. The monastery has a cave where Lama Naropa meditated," says Norboo Martse, a scholar.

According to legend, the place where the monastery is located was once a lake. However, Lama Naropa meditated here and caused the water of the lake to recede, thereby facilitating the construction of the monastery.

Every year, the monastery observes the festival of Yuru Kabgyat for two days. During the event, monks perform the mask dance.

The festival takes place during summer, on the 28th and 29th day of the second Tibetan month.



## Mega employment fair

A five-day mega employment fair was held in Srinagar recently with the aim of generating awareness among educated unemployed youth about self-employment schemes offered by various government departments and agencies, and to motivate them to become entrepreneurs.

The fair, organized by the District Employment and Counseling Centre, had 34 stalls, which included several government departments, banks and financial service providers.

Mohammad Jamaal, in-charge, District Employment and Counseling Centre, Government of Kashmir, said the fair provided information to youth looking for employment opportunities.

“Various departments have announced loan schemes. They give information on various loans available to people and tell people how they can adopt income-generating schemes to give employment to others also,” said Jamaal.

Farhat Abbas, an unemployed youth, said he had got the information he needed.

“We want information about employment. We saw a number of stalls and we have got a lot of information. I got information on fisheries, for which I had come here,” Abbas said.

The fair attracted over 30,000 people and evoked a tremendous response.



## Conservation of Dal Lake, a priority

The Jammu and Kashmir Government is sparing no effort in restoring the world famous Dal Lake in Srinagar that symbolises the beauty of the Kashmir Valley.

It recently deployed two state-of-the-art Finnish machines as part of a multi pronged approach to clean the lake.

The 'Water Master Classic 3' machine is known for its low maintenance and high success rate in the conservation of lakes in many countries.

Lakes and Waterways Development Authority (LAWDA) Executive Engineer Mushtaq Hussain said: "This machine can work on dry land, water, shallow depths. So, the area where we will be deploying these machines, none of our harvesters have been able to function because they are self-propelled machines, which need deep water."

Harri Tainio, an Italy based engineer who was in Srinagar to help in the assembling and testing of the machine, said: "It is a multi-purpose dredger. We can do many jobs with it. We have a 400-litre bucket, a 700-litre bucket, a pole erecting bucket and clamshell bucket. We have a pipeline so that we can pump up materials if necessary. It is a very good machine to clean up this lake."

People of the region feel the government should acquire more such machines to speed up the lake's restoration.

Fayaz Ahmad, a resident, said: "The government should get more such machines, because if they do, then the Dal will again become beautiful. It will also give a boost to tourism in Kashmir."



## Historical

There was a time when rivers in Kashmir used to serve as a mode of transport, and Weirs controlled water levels in rivers.

As part of an initiative to restore Jammu and Kashmir's heritage, the State Government has renovated a historical Weir.

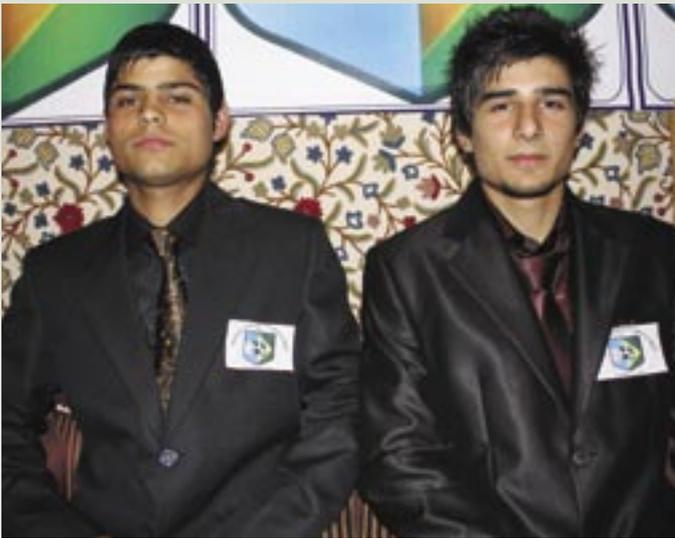
The manually - operated Weir on the River Jhelum in Srinagar has been restored three decades after it became dysfunctional. And as a result, water levels in rivers and navigation have also improved.

"Due to the renovated Weir, all channels or water bodies are alive throughout the year. The Weir was not working and the channels had turned dry," said Altaf Hussain Baba, a site engineer.

The Weir has improved daily life in the valley.

Mir Najeeb-Ullah, the chief engineer of the Department of Irrigation and Flood Control, said the Weir is an engineering marvel, and a necessity for Kashmir.

## In Brazil, Kashmiris ‘ bend it like Beckham ’



Young football players dream of training and playing abroad and, most of them never get a chance to realize their dreams.

Not so for two budding football players – Musadiq Mehraj and Mir Abdul Hanan from Jammu and Kashmir – who are undergoing a yearlong training stint at the Marilie Athletic Club in football crazy Brazil, thanks to an initiative of the International Sports Academy Trust (ISAT).

Juan Marcos Toria, a registered Brazilian football coach, who has been providing training to young players in the valley, set up a branch of ISAT in 2007.

Both Mehraj and Hanan, one a defender and the other a midfielder, are 17, and have trained at ISAT for over two years.

“This is a moment of honour for the state to see budding footballers at the international level,” Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said at a function to felicitate the young men before they left for Brazil.

The two youngsters are excited about training in Porto Alegre, the hometown of world famous footballer Ronaldinho.

“We are feeling proud to get training at the international level that too at the home place of a football star. We feel like brand ambassadors of Jammu and Kashmir at the international level,” said Hanan.

Juan Marcos, Director ISAT, believes there is world-class football talent in the state, and all that the players need, is exposure at the international level.



## Weir restored

“Our city channels have depleted water levels and we have brought it back to a proper level. For that, renovating this Weir was necessary,” he said. “Aesthetically, it has tourism interest as well as navigation interest. Even the construction has heritage value,” he added.

In addition, the department has decided to make the river upstream and its adjoining channels within Srinagar easily navigable, which will make the city more like Venice, and attract more tourists.

The public has appreciated the State Government’s initiative.

“For the past 10 to 15 years, we have lost a lot in Kashmir, but now the government is trying to revive everything,” said Shabir Ahmad, a resident.

Originally built by British engineers, the Weir is said to be over a century old.





## **Poultry farm bags international deal**

Eggs from the Kashmir Valley are all set to hit the international market for the first time.

The Tramboo Poultry Farm in Khonmoh region, near Srinagar City, has cracked an international deal after capturing the domestic market.

The eggs, popularly known as 'Desi Eggs', are in more demand than eggs that are produced in other states.

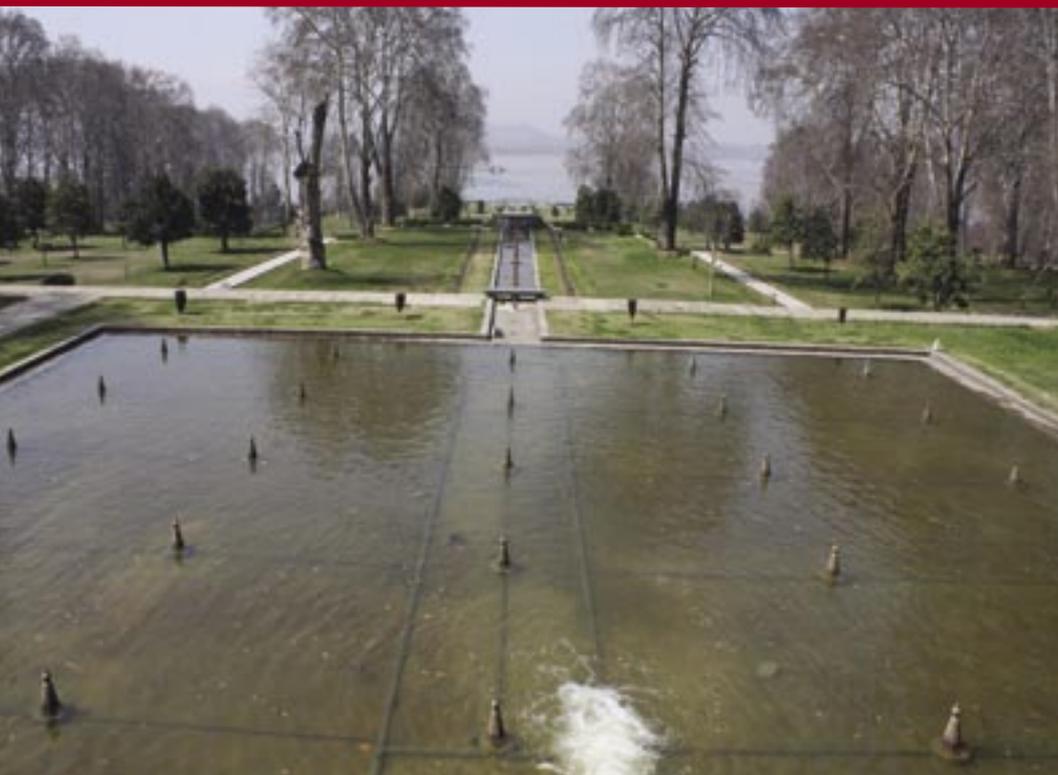
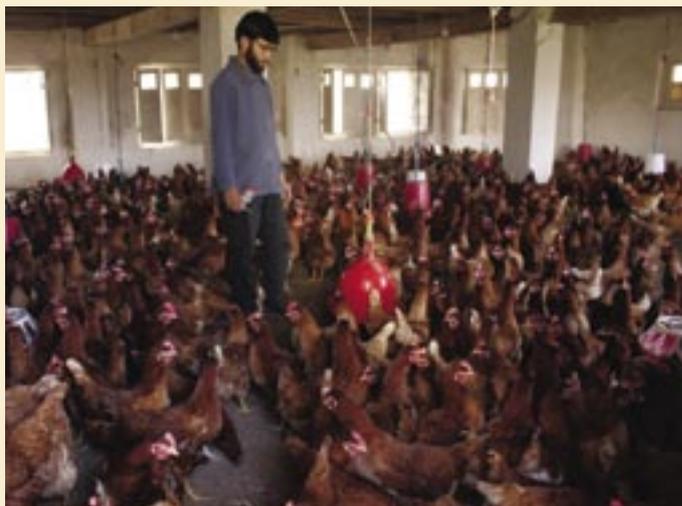
"There is a huge demand for the Kashmiri eggs. We supply eggs to the Kashmir region and to Ladakh. After capturing the Ladakh market, we have captured the Delhi and Jammu markets. Then, we have supplied eggs to five-star hotels," said Nazir Ahmad Tramboo, the managing director of Tramboo Poultry.

"Now, we will supply eggs to the international market, after all formalities are completed. I think they will be completed soon. After that, a direct flight from Kashmir to Dubai will carry our orders (eggs)," he added.

The poultry farm has also generated employment in the region.

"There are many girls and boys working at the poultry farm. It has increased employment in the region. We want it to expand so that more employment can be generated," said Zahoor Ahmad, the factory in charge.

Presently, the Tramboo poultry farm produces at least 30,000 eggs a day and, in the coming months, egg production will touch around a lakh per day.



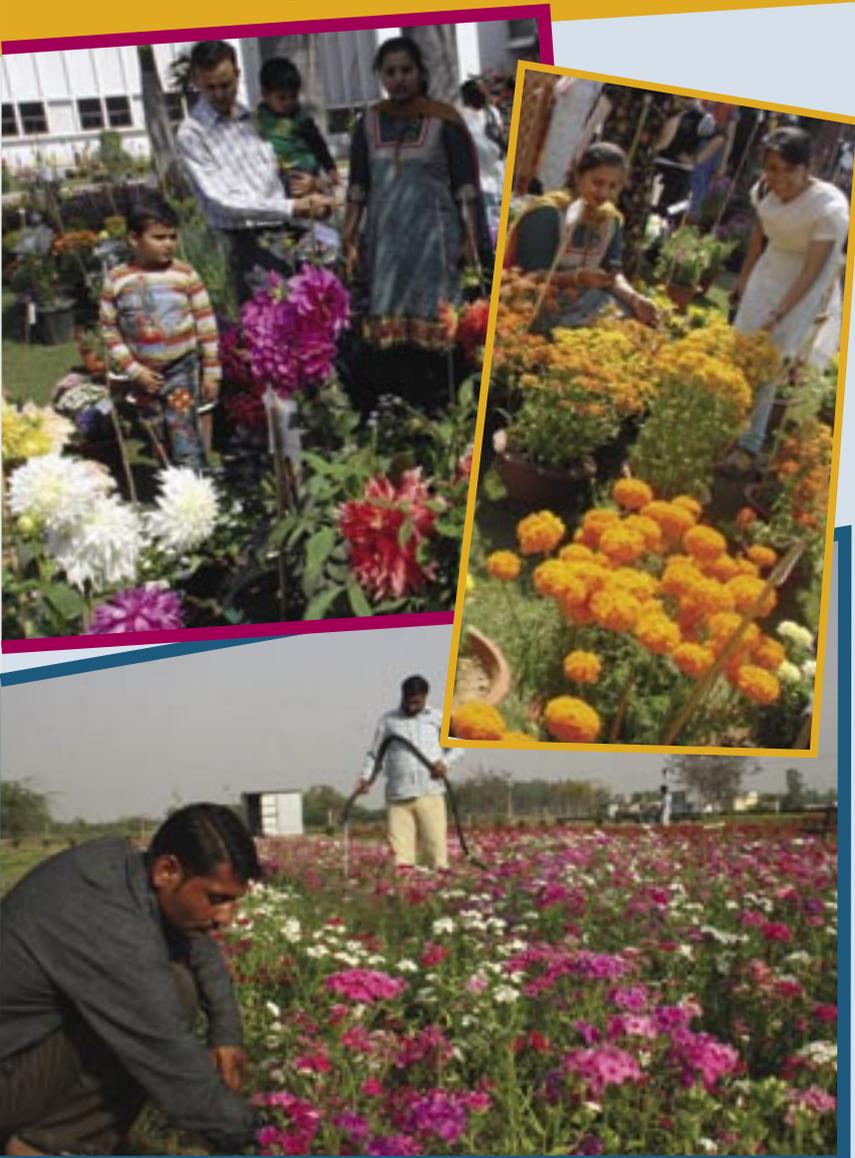
## **Mughal monuments**

Archaeologists are restoring medieval Mughal monuments in Jammu and Kashmir, in a bid to boost tourism in the state.

The monuments are located in the famous Nishat Bagh in the Kashmir Valley that was built by Mughal emperors.

"The organization took the decision that in order to boost tourism in the state, the historical structures in the city and in the adjoining areas need to be restored and preserved in their original traditional form. In this, the tourism department supported the decisions and provided

## Flower power



The Floriculture Department is encouraging farmers in Jammu and Kashmir to shift from traditional crops to the cultivation of flowers, as it has the potential to generate good revenue.

To encourage farmers and to attract tourists, the department has created a flower garden at the Bohr Camp, which is about 10 kilometers from Jammu.

“At the Bohr camp, we are multiplying marigold seeds and distributing to farmers free of cost. Likewise, we are going in for hi-tech floriculture. This will be a demonstration unit for farmers, and they will adopt hi-tech floriculture in the near future,” said Director Floriculture Jammu, K.K.Sharma.

To make floriculture a profitable commercial activity, awareness programs about the potential of the region to emerge as a prominent international flower business hub market are held regularly. Efforts are also on to grow new flowers, which have greater adaptability in the agro-climatic conditions of the region.

Flower shows too are held to attract as many participants as possible.

Earlier, the region's flower requirement was fulfilled through imports from places like Delhi and Chandigarh. But, with the commencement of flower cultivation in Jammu, farmers now export flowers like marigold and gladioli to other parts of the country, besides meeting local demand.

Floriculture department officials feel that floriculture can help to create employment opportunities in the state.

## get a facelift

sufficient funds to renovate and restore the structures,” said G.S. Naqash, Director of Floriculture.

The buildings being renovated are surrounded by beautiful gardens, and attractive lighting and fountains would be added to the pre-existing layout.

The Mughal garden, Nishat Bagh, is laid out as a broad cascade of terraces lined with avenues of Chinar and Cypress trees and is located on the eastern side of the Dal Lake. The garden was designed and built in 1633 by Asif Khan, the elder brother of Mughal Empress Noor Jahan.





## Bollywood returns to Kashmir



**K**ashmir is regaining popularity with Bollywood.

The latest film unit in Srinagar was the cast and crew of Bollywood film 'Saat Khon Maaf' (Seven Murders Forgiven), which is directed by filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj.

The film stars Priyanka Chopra and Irrfan Khan, who were spotted shooting at various scenic locations in the city.

Residents of the city say this is a good development.

"This is good progress for Kashmir and its people," said Sumaria, a student.

Tourists visiting Srinagar feel that

Kashmir scores over many foreign locales often used in Bollywood films.

"Bollywood is heading towards foreign locales like Switzerland but we have our own Switzerland here. We went to Sonmarg and Gulmarg. I really like the places. I thought there is no need to go anywhere. We have very nice locales in our own country," said Pooja, a tourist from Delhi.

'Saat Khon Maaf', regarded as the celluloid version of the Ruskin Bond book 'Susanna's Seven Husbands' features seven male leads.

In the film, Priyanka Chopra plays a negative character who kills her seven husbands.



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Editor in Chief: Dr. V. Candavelou, Editor: A.K. Dhyani

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